OSWESTRY & BORDER
CHRONICLE

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TURBINES REPORT SPARKS OUTRAGE

ANTI-WIND farm campaigners have taken a swipe at developers after a report found wind turbines last for half as long as previously thought.

Research by Professor Gordon Hughes has found turbines generally last for 12 years, rather than the 25 years which is used by the Government to calculate subsidies.

Now Montgomeryshire Against Pylons (MAP), which is fighting plans by National Grid to connect wind farms to the national power network, has claimed 'time is up' for such projects.

National Grid wants to build a 400,000 volt electricity line across the Shropshire border to feed electricity, which would be generated from windfarms sited in Mid Wales, into the national power network. Its proposed route is from an electricity substation at Cefn Coch, west of Welshpool, via Llansantffraid, south of Llanymynech and Oswestry, to Lower Frankton. There it will join the National Grid's main network.

by Graham Breeze

But following Professor Hughes' report, MAP leader Jonathan Wilkinson said the 'game is up' for turbine developers.

He said: "The research by Professor Hughes, who is a highly respected engineer and highly influential person, confirms our view that wind turbines are just not viable and I think the companies behind these developments know the game is up.

"They are trying to rush through all these developments because they know time is up, nobody believes them anymore and Professor Hughes confirms this."

Generous

The research studied 3,000 turbines in Britain and Professor Hughes, an economist at Edinburgh University and former energy advisor to the World Bank, predicts in the coming decade far more investment will be needed to replace older and ineffective turbines – which is likely to be passed on in higher household electricity bills.

He said the performance of the UK's wind turbines over the past 11 years had 'deteriorated markedly' and that 'the subsidy regime is extremely generous if investment in new wind farms is profitable despite the decline in performance due to age and over time'.

Mr Wilkinson said: "Once again the cost will be passed on to the general public and it will put people off living and having business here."

Professor Hughes added that the trend for larger wind turbines in Britain, which reach up to 400ft tall in some areas, increased wear and tear.

He said: "I strongly believe the bigger turbines are proving more difficult to manage and more likely to interfere with one another."

● Inquiry – See Page 10

Schedule packed for festival of literature

SCORES of activities are planned for the fourth literature festival in Oswestry.

The town's annual Festival of the Word will be taking place from March 9 until March 19.

A programme of events has been drawn up to include literature, film, adult and children's drama, poetry, song, journalism, creative writing workshops, school events, and town events.

They will take place morning, afternoon and night throughout the 10 days.

Headlining the event will be Michael Morpurgo, author of the worldwide children's best-seller War Horse.

Mr Morpurgo will formally open the event on March 10.

The programme for the festival will be officially unveiled on January 16 at The Walls Restaurant from 6pm at a special launch party. The event will be attended by award-winning actress, radio playwright and 2012 Booker long-listed author, Rachel Joyce.

Festival director John Waine, from The Best of Oswestry website, said: "We have another exceptional array of new and established literary, performance and theatrical talent lined up this year."

Tickets for the launch event, featuring readings from Rachel Joyce, are available at £8 from festival partner, Booka Bookshop, on (01691) 662244.

Call goes out for helpers

A CALL has gone out for more volunteers to help create a new tourist attraction near Oswestry.

The Glyn Valley Tramway Trust is working to restore the former rail line that until 1935 ran from Chirk to Glyn Ceiriog.

The first phase of the project, to restore the line from Pontfaen to Chirk, has already won planning permission. For more details visit *www.thegvt.org*

Expansion at family firm is on track

EXPANSION work on a family business in Oswestry which could help to create 20 jobs is on schedule.

Stonehouse Brewery was given £32,000 from Shropshire Council's Market Towns Revitalisation Programme this year to help create a new building at its site in Weston.

The business was set up in 2007 after its owners started making brews in their kitchen. But the old agricultural building it is based in is now falling into poor repair. The money from the unitary authority is helping to pay for a new, building and access with a customer service area.

The framework of the building has now been put up and it is hoped to be completed and ready for use by Easter. It will have a 450sq metre floorspace and will also be three times taller.

Alison Parr, brewery director, said: "The large steel frame structure has now been put up. We are hoping to be able to move the brewing kit in February. It is going on time at the moment. We are really pleased with the progress and have used local suppliers, where possible, for this build. "

Ms Parr said the expansion could create up to 20 jobs over the next 10 years.

There are also plans in the pipeline to turn parts of the premises into a tourist attraction in the future.

New year bundle of joy

AN OSWESTRY couple celebrated the new year in style with the January 1 arrival of their first baby. Andy Neeves and Tara Johnston welcomed daughter Sophie Neeves, who was born at 8.51am on New Year's Day weighing 3.540g at the maternity unit in Oswestry's Orthopaedic Hospital. *Picture: Simon Williams.*

Traders in town hail free car park help

FREE parking in the run up to Christmas in Oswestry helped give a boost to traders according to the town's Chamber of Commerce.

Oswestry Town Council agreed to offer free afternoon parking in Central, Smithfield and Horsemarket car park after 2pm from December 18 to 24.

Businesses in the town said the temporary move made a positive impact on their trade.

Martin Anderson, chairman of Oswestry Chamber of Commerce, said he hoped the chamber could work with the town council in 2013 to continue to improve trade next year.

He said: "I think the free parking had a positive impact on trade before Christmas.

"Lots of shops told me that they had been busy, with many shoppers commenting positively about the free parking.

"I'd like to pass on my thanks, on behalf of the traders in the town, to the town council.

"We hope they will look forward to working with the chamber to look at how things can be further improved next year."

A town council spokesman said free parking was an added gesture to support the town centre.

Normal charges applied in car parks at all other times and normal charges applied on car parks operated by Shropshire Council.

Resurfacing work starts

WORK to resurface a section of Oswestry's bypass will begin on Monday.

Officials at the Highways Agency said the night-time work on the A5 and A483 between the Mile End roundabout and the junction with the Morda road is due to begin next week.

The work between 8pm and 7am is likely to last for four nights. There will be a 40mph speed restriction and possible diversions.

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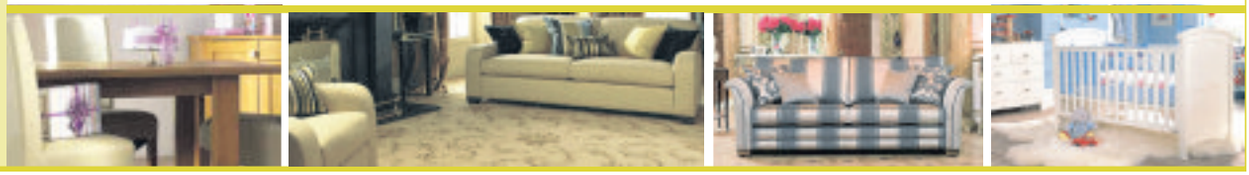

NEWS

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Affordable housing bid sparks traffic concerns

by Graham Breeze

PLANS to build 14 affordable homes on the site of a former tax office in Oswestry have prompted fears about traffic problems.

Oswestry Town Council is concerned that plans to create homes in Middleton Road could cause dangerous access.

An application by Mr Steve Swann, of Wrekin Housing Trust in Telford, has been sent to Shropshire Council seeking permission to build homes on 12-14 Middleton Road, currently a private home. The application states the homes could be two and three-bedroom family houses available to rent.

A report in the planning application states: "The design is a contemporary interpretation that fits comfortably into its surroundings, providing a sustainable development."

But councillors said it could lead to overdevelopment and felt access could be dangerous.

Shropshire Councillor Bill Benyon said: "It's another example where gradually developers are trying to squeeze as much as possible on the tiny sites."

He was also concerned about road access. "Potentially a death trap," he said. "No visibility in any direction." He called for the developer to think again.

Councillor Steve Haworth said he was concerned about traffic and the height of some of the buildings.

Councillor Martin Bennett, town mayor, felt the effect on traffic flows needed to be considered.

The town council clerk David Preston noted the application raised issues over access and limited visibility.

He will ask the unitary authority to consider the traffic flow in the area.

A design and access planning report read: "Access has been designed so as to ensure highway safety and access for all types of vehicles needed."

College will develop its sports pitch at campus

BOSSES at a college have won permission to further develop new sports facilities on its campus.

A new multi use games area (MUGA) at the Oswestry campus of Walford and North Shropshire College was opened this year.

College bosses applied for permission in September for floodlights to be installed at the games area to allow it to be used at night.

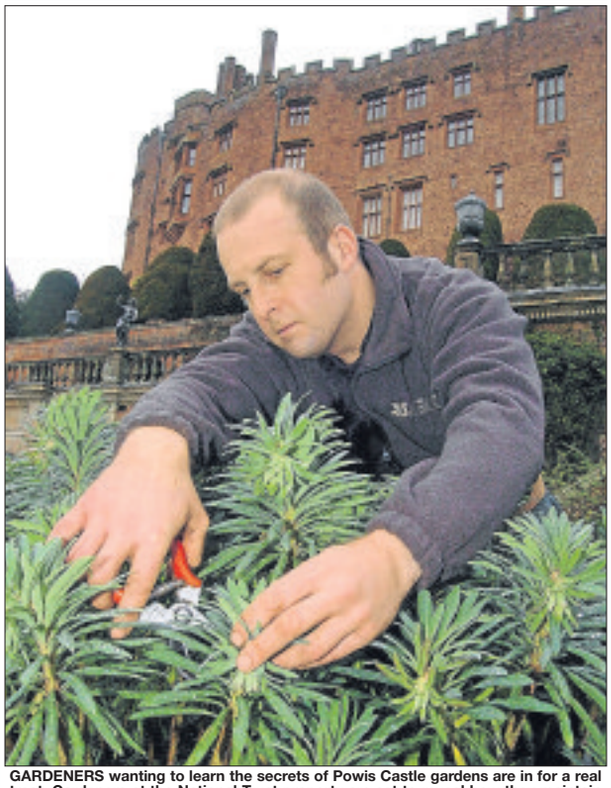
They also applied for approval to build a 14 space car park and perimeter fencing around the college's grass training pitch.

A design and access statement submitted in support of the bid said: "The provision of floodlights is to allow a greater intensity of use thereby stimulating higher levels of sport and physical activity.

"The perimeter fencing enclosure for the existing grass training pitch is to provide a level of security whilst preventing ball loss during use as well as protecting vehicles and pedestrians."

Shropshire Council gave approval to the plans under delegated powers.

Castle garden secrets revealed



GARDENERS wanting to learn the secrets of Powis Castle gardens are in for a real treat. Gardeners at the National Trust property are set to reveal how they maintain the famous gardens in a talk entitled 'Secrets From The Powis Gardeners' on January 15. Getting ready to receive visitors is gardener Neil Head, seen trimming a Euphorbia in one of the castle borders. *Picture: Simon Williams.*

Opinions are split on prayer proposal

PLANS for a Muslim prayer centre at a former church in Oswestry have divided opinion, new documents show.

So far 34 people have contacted Shropshire Council in support of the plans by Oswestry Muslim Society while 26 people have objected.

The British National Party has urged the public to reject the plans, which would see the 19th century former Presbyterian Church on Oswald Road converted into the prayer centre.

BNP leaders say more than 2,000 leaflets have been put through Oswestry letterboxes opposing the scheme.

North Shropshire organiser Phil Reddall said the leaflet drop was a step in the party's campaign against the plans and said further activity was likely before Shropshire Council makes a decision.

"Many people might not agree with us but all we are trying to do is raise awareness of what is going on."

But supporter Andrew Ward said: "It's about time the Muslims of Oswestry and the surrounding area had a place of their own to meet."

Oswestry Muslim Society has already raised about £70,000 towards the cost of the £250,000 project.

Shropshire Council hopes to determine the bid by January 11.

Hospital friends are hosting AGM

THE Oswestry branch of the League of Friends of the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital in Gobowen will hold its annual meeting this month.

The meeting will be held on January 16 at 7pm in the cafe area of the entrance foyer of the hospital. All are welcome.

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Vital talks to decide future use of empty village school

CRUNCH talks will be held in the New Year to see if an empty, former village primary school near Oswestry will be kept for community use. Maesbury Primary School was closed in July and some villagers fear it could possibly be sold off to developers.

A committee has been formed by about eight members of the village to see if they can save the building.

They have arranged a meeting on January 22 to discuss if they should halt or carry on work with plans to turn the old school into a centre for community use.

by Graham Breeze

Sue Chalke, a committee member, said: "I believe we need to look at whether we are going to carry on. The council has asked us where we are and what is happening."

She said the meeting was for committee members to make some plans or take some action.

"It is an important meeting for committee members," she said. "We need to decide what we are going to be doing. We need a plan of action.

"The school has been closed since July. The building is empty and we need to make our minds up."

Centre

She said there was 'a possibility' that committee members may decide not to go ahead with plans to use the building as a community centre in the village.

"We haven't had a huge amount of public support from the community and there are only a handful of people on the committee."

She said at the moment the committee was looking into doing a feasibility study.

Shropshire Council has estimated the current use valuation of Maesbury Primary School to be about £250,000 and if villagers wanted to rent it, based on a return of around 10 per cent of the existing use value, the figure would be £25,000 per annum.

Residents have already held a number of meetings about the issue and have warned that if the school building is lost there will be 'nothing left' in the village.

The January meeting will be held at 7.30pm at The Navigation Inn, in Maesbury Marsh.

Teenagers injured after car hits tree

TWO teenagers were injured after the car they were in overturned after hitting a tree at Gobowen.

The accident happened on the A5 at Gobowen, near Oswestry, at about 12.45am on Sunday.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman said: "Crews arrived on the scene to find a single vehicle that had left the carriageway and had been in collision with a tree. The car had come to rest on its roof.

"Two teenage men were out of the vehicle on the crew's arrival. Ambulance personnel treated the driver of the car for a head injury and the passenger for arm injuries. Both casualties were conveyed to Royal Shrewsbury Hospital for further assessment and treatment."

Two ambulances, a rapid response vehicle, a paramedic area support officer and a MARS BASICS doctor were sent to the accident, along with two fire engines from Oswestry, a rescue tender from Wellington and the rescue unit from Wrexham.

Firefighters gave first aid to the teenagers before the ambulance arrived.

Business club for young adults

YOUNG adults in the Oswestry area are invited to take part in a Start Up Club on Tuesday to help them start their own businesses.

Start Up Club will focus on basic start up information, organising a simple business plan, helping with sales and marketing, access to finance, and promoting a new business.

The club meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm at the Guildhall. People must register at *www.startuposwestry.eventbrite.com*

Health store in shop front revamp plan

A HEALTH food chain store has put in a planning application to redecorate a shop front in Oswestry.

Holland & Barrett wants to revamp the premises of 27 Bailey Street, the former Relate charity furniture shop.

It also wants to install an external air conditioning unit in the building.

The company will also install new signs which will be explained in a future application.

Town councillors discussed the application which has been sent to Shropshire Council for a decision.

Councillor Romer Hoseason said: "I would like to welcome the arrival of Holland and Barrett into the town."

A design and access report in the planning application said: "Holland & Barrett always consider the environmental implications of their developments, and whilst the planning application only relates to the shop front decoration and the installation of external air conditioning condensing unit, Holland & Barrett are aware of their duty to minimise their contribution to climate change.

"As such, the proposed condenser has been sized to meet the requirements of the proposed store and all equipment is to be maintained and serviced as per the recommendation. They are also aware that in taking on a historic building, conserving the heritage of the building must accompany the promotion of sustainable economic growth."

The report said that The Holland & Barrett design served to 'preserve and enhance the character of the area'.

Club's 2013 party

WELSHPOOL'S senior citizens new year party will be held on January 29 at the town hall in Broad Street from 2pm. Tickets are limited and now on sale from Welshpool Jewellers and Flaunt It in Cumberland Place. The afternoon will include entertainment, a celebrity guest, bingo, lucky admission tickets and afternoon tea.

MP's festive gift to hospital

Back, from left, MP Owen Paterson and wife Rose, director of the unit, Mr Aheed Osman, hospital chief executive, Wendy Farrington Chadd, and professor W El Masry. Front, resettlement assistant, Leanne McGivern. *Picture: Peter Flemmich.*

OSWESTRY Orthopaedic Hospital was given a £53,600 Christmas gift by North Shropshire MP and Environment Secretary Owen Paterson and his wife Rose.

The money was the result of an epic fundraising horse ride in Mongolia and was handed to the hospital's Midland's Centre for Spinal Injuries to fund research.

The Patersons also gave an equal amount to the Royal Irish Regiment Benevolent Fund and a further £6,000 to Mercy Corps Mongolia.

The fundraising event took place on holiday when Owen Paterson was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The total amount raised from the race was £113,000.

The Mongol Derby is a 1,000-kilometre race on semi-wild horses across the wilderness of the Mongolian Steppe.

Mr Paterson said: "The race was certainly tough but the causes are very worthy. We encountered rivers, thunderstorms, wild animals, dehydration, sunburn, fatigue, soreness and the ever present danger of injury from potentially falling off the 25 different horses we rode."

NEWS in brief

Chance to apply for council role

PEOPLE wanting to stand as a parish or unitary councillor in 2013 are being urged to look out for nomination forms.

Local elections for parish, town and unitary seats will be held on May 2 when polling stations open between 7am and 10pm.

For parish and town councils, all nomination papers must be received no later than 12pm on April 5.

A spokesperson for St Martins Parish Council, near Oswestry, said: "The average age of the councillors is over 55 so it would be great if younger people were to put their names forward. There is training available so please don't think that you can't do it. You can."

For more information see the website page called Become a Councillor at *http://shropsdemserv.web.coop/live/cme120.htm*

Society tunes up for music festival

MEMBERS of a choral society based in Mid Wales will begin rehearsals for a music festival next week.

Welshpool Choral Society will start preparing for this year's Montgomeryshire County Music Festival on Monday.

The programme will consist of Mozart's Mass in C (Coronation Mass) and Andrew Carter's Benedicite. The concert will be held on May 11.

Call secretary Johannah Guttridge on (01938) 554615 or 07891 446418.

Guitarist to sing the hits of Holly

GUITAR player and vocalist Mal Coote will perform at Welshpool Social Club on January 26 at 7pm.

Mr Coote will perform hits by the like of Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran. Further details will be released shortly at *www.rockandrollpromotions.blogspot.co.uk*

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NEWS 01691 668094

Traders urged to join chamber

TRADERS in Oswestry have been urged to join the town's chamber of commerce to have a say on the future direction of business in the area.

With Shropshire Council leader Keith Barrow due to attend a meeting of the group in the new year, bosses at Oswestry Chamber of Commerce say there has been no better time to support the organisation.

Chairman Martin Anderson said: "The chamber is growing and moving forward and the group can make an impact on the life of the town. Attending the meetings and joining the chamber is a great way to meet like-minded people, discuss business and look at ways to improve the town.

"It is a good way of meeting council officers and getting to know councillors. For example the council leader Keith Barrow is due to attend our February meeting."

Chairman Martin Anderson said the group had made a difference to how businesses operated and co-operated in the town in the last 12 months.

And he said through various partnerships, including Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council, the group was making a positive impact on the town.

He said one of the successes, thanks to the partnership with the town council, was the creation of Oswestry's first Christmas Season. The season saw various activities which have happened every year in the town linked together with new attractions.

The new initiative meant there were activities staged every weekend throughout December in the run-up to Christmas.

Mr Anderson said: "It was a real team effort and it was great to be able to create an Oswestry Christmas Season.

"It was through partnerships we have, particularly with the town council. The town council should take a lot of praise for its work."

Mr Anderson said he hoped the town's new Christmas Season had helped boost the festive footfall.

by Graham Breeze

Floodlights plan backed

A FOOTBALL club has been given planning approval to install floodlights around its pitch.

The bid was submitted with Shropshire Council by Morda United Football Club for its pitch at Weston Road.

The club said having the pitch available in the evenings would allow the wider community to use the site.

A planning and design statement on behalf of the club said: "This proposal would allow matches and training to be conducted during the hours of darkness.

"It would provide additional opportunities for club, community and youth football.

"It would improve engagement at all levels, improve health and reduce obesity. We have taken care to ensure that spill light in the area is kept to an acceptable level."

The statement added that the columns carrying the lights would be 18 metres tall.

Shropshire Council gave approval under its delegated powers.

Ironwork art goes on display

A DISPLAY of ironwork by the British Ironwork centre, is being shown at the Oswestry Visitor and Exhibition Centre. The centre based at Aston, near Oswestry, has the UK's largest display of decorative ironwork, from elaborate garden pavilions to sundials and hand crafted ironmongery. Taking a look at a 12ft giraffe was Sue Millar from the centre. *Picture: Peter Flemmich.*

NEWS 01691 668094

Survey deadline extended to have a say on town's future

THE deadline for completing a survey on how Oswestry should look in 2020 has been extended to allow as many people as possible to put forward their view.

The Oswestry 2020 survey will still be available online until Monday.

Hundreds of people have already put forward their ideas of how Oswestry should look in the future, thanks to a body of volunteers who have joined the consultants in questioning members of the public, organisations, businesses and the farming community.

The consultation is part of work by the Oswestry 2020 partnership which is working together to develop the new community led plan for the town – a blueprint which will help determine local priorities for new investment over the coming years.

by Graham Breeze

The steering group has been working with Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council to identify issues facing the town.

Commitment

Irene Evison from consultants R4C said people had been asked to give their opinions about how Oswestry should develop and how money should be spent on the town through stalls at public events, surveys in supermarkets throughout the town and in the neighbourhood shops and through internet questionnaires.

"There is a real commitment among the volunteers. They are getting actively involved, helping with the surveys and manning stalls at public events," she said.

"It is too early to see any results of what people would like for Oswestry."

People can visit the Oswestry 2020 website – *www.oswestry2020.co.uk* to find the consultation document. The Oswestry 21 group has welcomed the consultation.

Ms Evison said: "Clearly, this extension is a good thing, as the council and other public bodies will be basing a lot of their future decisions on the answers people give."

Results will be made public in the new year. Oswestry is one of five pilot areas in Shropshire producing a neighbourhood plan.

Holiday home plans at farm

PARISH councillors have given their support to plans to turn two farm buildings in the Shropshire countryside into accommodation for holidaymakers.

A planning application has been made to turn the buildings at Bromwich Park at Aston, near Oswestry, into four holiday lets for up to 14 visitors.

Oswestry Rural Parish Council has been consulted on the plans and members have indicated their support. A letter to Shropshire Council said: "The council support this application to diversify by converting farm buildings. They encourage any projects that help the economy and help tourism within the rural areas."

The move will create employment and an economic boost as well as address a shortage of visitor accommodation in the Oswestry area, developers say.

A design and access statement by Mr J Barratt said: "At full occupancy the site would develop £2,184 per week."

Pictures and pints at town pub

Griffin Inn licensees Gary and Carol Brennan.

A PUB in Oswestry is becoming as well known for its paintings as it is for its pints.

The Griffin Inn on Albion Hill is run by Gary and Carol Brennan, who have always been keen to support the visual arts.

The outside of the pub is already home to a sculpture created by local artist Jas Davidson called We're In No Hurry. The work, on the wall of The Griffin, has been nicknamed Three Skinny Drinkers and a special bitter was brewed for its unveiling by Stonehouse Brewery.

Now Gobowen photographer Geoff Armitage is the latest to have an exhibition at the Griffin. His exhibition of pictures, which runs until January 7, is just one of the attractions Mr and Mrs Brennan have brought to the town.

A wide screen television is running a continuous slideshow of 200 of Geoff's best photographs.

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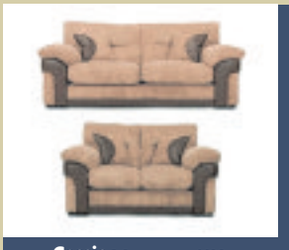
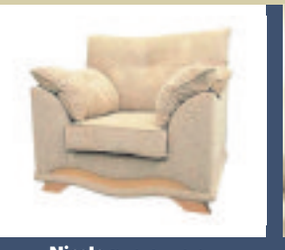
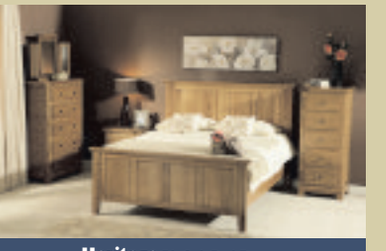

Cassie 3 Seater was £499, 2 Seater was £399 Buy Both £699

Tanner 3 Seater + 2 Chairs was £1699 SALE £999


Nicole Single Armchairs were £399 each SALE £159 each


Heritage 5ft Oak Bed Frame was £699 SALE £545

Jubilee 4ft 6in Myers Memory 800 was £349 Sale £279

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Traveller site plan sparking objections

THREE major businesses have objected to controversial plans by a gipsy family to set up a travellers camp near Oswestry, claiming the proposal could cost jobs.

The objections from Henlle Park Golf Club, Lion Quays Waterside Resort and Moreton Hall boarding school have been sparked by a planning application by Jerry and Michelle Berry to site a mobile home and a touring caravan pitch near Gobowen.

The site, a former rubbish tip, is opposite the plush golf club, within walking distance of the prestigious Lion Quays hotel and near the independent boarding school.

A previous application by the couple for a larger travellers' site on Henlle Lane has already been turned down and an appeal was thrown out by a Government inspector.

An objection letter submitted by planning representative Clive Roberts, on behalf of the golf club, the Lion Quays and the school, said the businesses, which employ between them more than 500 people, remained concerned about the site plans.

Shropshire Council had hoped to determine the bid by December 10 but a decision is now likely to be taken in the new year.

Hope club bid will take off

A GROUP of model aeroplane flying enthusiasts are hoping their bid to be allowed to fly their aircraft near Oswestry won't be shot down by council bosses this time.

The last time Oswestry and District Model Flying Club applied for planning permission to fly throughout the year its bid was refused by the now defunct Oswestry Borough Council in 2006 over noise concerns.

Club members had to appeal to a Government planning inspector to win the right to reach for the skies. That permission ran out after two years and since then the club members have been using a planning rule which allows them to fly their models from their base in a Maesbury farmer's field on just 28 days throughout the year.

by Graham Breeze

But founder member Mervyn Davies said the 28-day rule had cost the club many members which was the reason why the club was again seeking permission to fly on any day of the year.

Mr Davies said: "We only have five members now. Many have left because of the 28-day rule. People want to fly on the day of their choice.

"The 28-day rule is difficult because you have to record when members are flying. It restricts when people can fly their planes.

"Having full-time permission gives us more flexibility. We need new people, especially young people to keep us going.

"Young people in Oswestry would love it if they tried it. Two years ago the world champion was a seven-year-old girl. Children's little fingers are ideal for controlling the aircraft."

Mr Davies said he hoped Shropshire councillors would accept the bid.

He said: "The last time we went for full time permission we applied to Oswestry Borough Council.

"There was a petition with about 180 names against it and councillors were against it."

Shropshire Council hopes to determine the bid by January 29.

Girls celebrate county places

EIGHT girls from Shropshire prep school Packwood Haugh in Ruyton XI Towns are celebrating after learning that they have won places in the under 13 county hockey squad.

The girls attended training at Shropshire's Junior Development Centre throughout the autumn term and took part in the county trials .

Pupils Annabel Robertson, Georgie Bibby, Millie Shaw, Amelia Maunder, Amelia Ashworth, Lottie Clarke, Ellie Mason and Rosie Simpson have been told they won places in the county squad.

Kate Parry, head of PE at Packwood, was delighted to hear of the girls' selection for the squad. She said: "They have all worked so hard in their hockey training and they fully deserve their success.

"It is a fantastic achievement for one school out of all those in Shropshire to be providing over a third of the players for the county squad of 21."

Tasty treat to help hospice

A GINGERBREAD house was created by a member of staff at a college to help raise cash for charity. Christine Thompson, careers and progression adviser at Walford and North Shropshire College, pictured, baked and decorated the cake in aid of Hope House Children's Hospice. The cake was packed full of home-made gingerbread biscuits and raffled off raising £30. The winning ticket was bought by Andy Holland, head of faculty of professional studies at the college.

Web quiz attempts to reduce 999 calls

AN ONLINE quiz has been launched in a bid to reduce the number of people ringing 999 or visiting accident and emergency departments in Mid Wales for minor injuries or coughs and colds.

The Welsh Ambulance Service and NHS Direct Wales said it hoped the new Choose Well quiz would help people 'choose well' when it comes to care this winter.

The two groups say evidence reveals that a significant number of people dial 999 for an ambulance or go to A&E departments despite there being other more suitable services available.

Choose Well centres on a colour coded thermometer to assist people in linking their symptoms or injury to the right service.

The online quiz asks browsers what level of the campaign thermometer they would choose for five illness or injury scenarios.

Leanne Hawker, partner in healthcare lead for NHS Direct Wales, said: "Every day the ambulance service receives 999 calls for minor illnesses or injuries such as coughs, toothache or sore throats. These calls can divert our resources away from the patients that need us the most – those facing a cardiac arrest, severe blood loss, or a stroke."

Log on to www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/DoItYourself/fluquiz to take the quiz.

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Cyclists to be given advice on bike care

BASIC bike maintenance skills will be taught at a specialist course in Oswestry.

Shropshire Council is offering the free course on January 25 at Eastern Oswestry Community Centre from 10am to 1pm.

The course is part of a wider programme of adult cycle maintenance classes planned for 2013 in Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Ludlow.

It will be suitable for cyclists with limited knowledge of how their bike works and limited experience of maintaining their bike.

The adult workshop will help participants carry out a safety check, identify the more common faults that develop with everyday use of a bicycle, and learn how to undertake minor adjustments and repairs such as adjusting a brake and tackling a puncture repair.

Simon Jones, Shropshire Council's cabinet member with responsibility for cycling, said: "This course is a great way of tuning up your bike to ensure it is in safe working order ready for new year cycle trips."

To book a place on the course go to *www.travelshropshire.co.uk/cycle-maintenance* and for more information about the course call Ray Hughes on (01743) 253063 or e-mail *transport@shropshire.gov.uk*

Students give community food price study a boost

STUDENTS on a BTEC business course at Walford College have teamed up with community group Oswestry21 (OS21) to carry out The Oswestry Food Price Study.

This study by OS21 has been running for several years but has been boosted by the link up with the business course.

They joined in enthusiastically as small groups in the monthly task of recording the prices of a selection of fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, bread and cheese and inputting them into a spread sheet for analysis as part of their course studies.

by Graham Breeze

The class is also looking at where the goods come from and how they are packaged as well as marketing techniques.

Andrew Tullo, of OS21, said: "There are explanations why fresh food prices tend to drift upwards at Christmas time.

"They include increased demand and reduced vegetable yield resulting from poor weather.

"But just how much prices increase and whether this is seen in both the supermarkets and independent outlets including the market is something that the Oswestry Food Price Study may reveal."

Mr Tullo said a preliminary analysis of data in 2009/10 showed that fruit and veg were consistently less expensive during that year and it will now be possible to look at this over a much longer period as well as year on year rates of inflation.

"We are being told often that food prices will rise inexorably and that as a country we will need to rely more on domestic produce to secure supplies," he said.

"This local study promises to reveal some useful background data as shoppers become more discriminating on what fresh food they buy."

Data is being collected monthly from; Powis Hall Market, including Mickey Finn's Fish stall and Hartshorn's Butchers, Covent Garden Fruit and Vegetable Store, Nyhan's (butcher), Sainsbury's and Morrisons.

Level three BTEC business students from Walford and North Shropshire College, in Oswestry, who are doing market research in the town. With Joanne Peoples, from Micky Finns fish stall in the Powis Hall indoor market, are students Zoe Crossley, 19, and Mike Birch, 25. *Picture: Simon Williams.*

Fair provides advice on jobs

THE question of which career to pursue in the future has been made a little bit easier for students at one school in Shropshire.

Oswestry School held its own careers and higher education fair, giving students a taste of various professions and learning opportunities.

The fair was staged in the school's Peter Humphreys Centre and pupils from the fourth form to the upper sixth could view a wide range of different stands, with exhibitors from a huge variety of careers, universities and gap year providers.

With more than 30 exhibitors, including Old Oswestrians, pupils were able to gain valuable advice on where their futures could take them.

The Peter Humphreys Centre was used to stage Oswestry School's Christmas Fair, organised by Linda Jones, head of business studies. The fair raised a total of £606 in aid of Help for Heroes and for the Astroturf fund.

NEWS in brief

Hill fort project is being relaunched

A PROJECT to care for Oswestry's ancient hill fort has been relaunched.

The Old Oswestry Landscape and Archaeology Project aims to look after the monument, which is in the guardianship of English Heritage.

It is seen as one of the most important hill forts in Europe and campaigners say the project group will be key to making sure it is preserved.

Spokeswoman Heather Hidden said that anyone interested in finding out more about the group should contact her at heather.hidden@btinternet.com

Future shape of town on agenda

A DISCUSSION will be held in February on the future shape and direction of a church in a village near Oswestry.

The talks have been organised by members of St John the Baptist Church at Whittington. They will be held on February 9 from 10am to 12.30pm at Whittington Senior Citizens Hall.

Reverend Sarah Burton said: "This will be an opportunity for everyone to have their say."

Cricket club fun

AN EVENING of light musical entertainment is on at Whittington Cricket Club, near Oswestry, from 7.30pm on January 18. Call (01691) 681036.

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Well, what a remarkable year it turned out to be

SO 2012 came and went – and what a year it was, with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics dominating the calendar nationwide.

Oswestry and the borders joined in the celebrations and we all enjoyed a year which should remain in our memories for ever.

Even non-royalists acknowledged the remarkable achievements of our reigning monarch and her dedication to serving the nation for 60 years with such outstanding dignity.

And our Olympians and Paralympians surpassed even the wildest dreams as medals came tumbling our way in a sporting year never to be forgotten.

More locally the news agenda was largely dominated by the continued fight against National Grid plans to build windfarms in Mid Wales, together with a 400,000-volt electricity line across the Shropshire border

BREEZE ABOUT TOWN
with Graham Breeze

to feed electricity. Its proposed route is from an electricity substation at Cefn Coch, west of Welshpool, via Llansantffraid to Lower Frankton. There it will join the National Grid's main network.

This week anti-windfarm campaigners took a massive swipe at developers after a report found wind turbines last for half as long as previously thought.

Research by a respected professor has found turbines generally last for 12 years, rather than the 25 years which is used by the Government to calculate subsidies.

Now Montgomeryshire Against Pylons has claimed 'time is up' for such projects.

The whole process is being scrutinised in minute detail by the protesters and, while there is massive support for the campaign, even at ministerial level, it's hard to believe that the proposals will not be rubber-stamped – eventually.

□□□□□□□□□

ON A personal note 2012 was a memorable year in the Breeze household too with the arrival of two grandchildren to ensure that life will never be the same again.

Th new arrivals, just four days apart, have brought new baby sitting duties and a house filled with all the noise and associated clutter. Eight months on I've still avoided the dreaded nappy-changing duties, though. How long can I hold out?

□□□□□□□□□

ON THE sporting front life as a long-suffering Wolves supporter has been grim and I couldn't wait to see the back of 2012. Trouble is, things look just as bleak for 2013. As if relegation from the Premiership was not bad enough we are now plunging towards the bottom of the Championship and I'm not sure how much leg-pulling I can take from friends and work colleagues.

To make matters worse, I can't even pronounce the name of our new manager or understand what he's trying to say when interviewed.

There's obviously something being lost in interpretation between manager and player because none of them look as if they know what they are doing.

□□□□□□□□□

AT THE Chronicle we're getting ready to celebrate our second birthday, which in itself an amazing achievement during times of such economic gloom.

That success is all down to you, our readers and advertisers, so thanks for all your support during 2012 and have a prosperous and enjoyable 2013.

New book chronicles stars' epic 200-mile charity walk

Martin Darlington with his new book. *Picture: Peter Flemmich*

The Wales Air Ambulance flying over Powis Castle.

A BOOK chronicling the epic journey of opera star Rhys Meirion and fellow walkers who trekked 200 miles across Wales for charity, has been on sale after being released in time for Christmas.

Cerddwn Ymlaen: Walk On for Wales Air Ambulance by Martin Darlington charts the tenor's fundraising drive for the helicopter charity, visiting all three air ambulances en route. Several stars joined the walk, including television host Josie D'Arby and X Factor's Lucie Jones.

Meirion and WAA pilot Captain Darlington led the walkers from Swansea to Caernarfon, through Welshpool, to raise funds for Leap into Action – the charity's campaign to upgrade its Mid Wales aircraft.

The walk has raised £92,000, which contributed to the successful introduction last month of a 'new generation' helicopter at WAA's Welshpool base. The new EC135 aircraft is the most advanced air ambulance in the UK, with cutting-edge features and extra room to treat patients in flight.

Written by Capt Darlington, who is now flying the new helicopter on lifesaving missions, the book tells a diary-style account of the walk from each person who took part.

The book is a personal account from eight principle walkers – who started off as strangers, endured blisters, aching muscles, infections and exhaustion along the way – to finish the walk as life-long friends. Mr Meirion said: "This was one of the most intense and rewarding experiences of my life. It was so encapsulating that we seemed to move off into our own world for that week and it was almost as if time stood still."

Proceeds from the sale of the book will go towards Walk On 2013, which aims to build on this year's success.

Two book signings with Mr Meirion and Mr Darlington have been held at Coed y Dinas in Welshpool. The book is £15 and is available online atwww.walk-on.co.uk

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IS IT EASIER AND QUICKER TO DIVORCE IF WE HAVE NO CHILDREN?

Q: My husband and I have been married for twenty years but have drifted into almost separate lives. My husband is happy for us to continue living together but I would like to divorce whilst there is still time to meet someone with whom I have more in common. Will the fact that we don't have children make getting a divorce quicker and easier?

A: Provided the marriage is more than a year old and has broken down irretrievably a divorce petition can be issued based on one of five facts, irrespective of children in the marriage. The five facts are: adultery, unreasonable behaviour, desertion, two years' separation with the other party's consent or five years separation without consent.

Once your divorce petition has been accepted you can apply for a Decree Absolute, but you must still obtain a financial order to sever all financial ties with your husband, otherwise such ties will remain open. Normal practice is that both parties make a full and frank disclosure of their financial circumstances, including any equity in the family home and other jointly owned property, savings, shares, pensions etc, together with any individually owned assets. Following financial disclosure your lawyer will advise on what is an appropriate and fair settlement.

If your husband is unwilling to provide financial information voluntarily you will be advised to meet with a trained Mediator to try and negotiate an amicable settlement. If your husband refuses to attend Mediation, or negotiations break down during Mediation, you should apply to the Court for a financial order. To do this you will need to either obtain a public funding (legal aid) certificate or provide your lawyer with money on account of costs. You should however be aware that from April 2013 the rules for public funding are changing, reducing the scope for who will be eligible.

Further information relating to this question is available from Caroline Gregg, a Trainee Legal Executive with GHP Legal. For information relating to any other legal matter please call GHP Legal on 01691 659194, visit www.ghplegal.co.uk or attend one of our FREE legal diagnostic clinics every Wednesday 12-3pm (no appointment necessary).

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LETTERS

01691 668094

Getting through was real problem

I SPENT exactly three quarters of an hour trying to get through to The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital to cancel an appointment they had sent me by letter yesterday.

I rang the four numbers which were given continually to cancel the appointment, but I gave up.

It said that failure to attend without cancellation would result in being referred back to the General Practitioner, so I phoned the surgery and explained the situation, and asked if they had a number which they could ring to cancel the appointment for me.

The answer was in the affirmative, and the lady gave me a number to ring. I got through immediately.

I explained to the person who answered the call what had happened and her reply was that they were very busy, short of staff, and were covering for both hospitals.

She was able to give me an alternative date immediately.

As I was putting the phone down from talking to her, the postman delivered the same letter again.

The point I would like to make is that, under these circumstances, it is no wonder patients fail to turn up for appointments if it takes so long to get through.

And what an utter waste of money sending the same letter out two days running.

No wonder they are millions of pounds over budget.

DICK WILLIAMS
Churchstoke

Take God's instructions literally

THE term Christian describes one who follows Christ who lived and spoke the word of God. This was the Old Testament Bible.

When asked how eternal life could be gained, He replied: "Keep the commandments." These are plain and simple and show the way of life required by God.

The commands are reinforced throughout the New Testament. Jesus Christ said it is a straight and narrow way and "few there be that find it".

It was unpopular and resulted in the persecution of Christ and his followers, a number of whom were put to death.

Is true Christianity more popular today? Apparently not.

Many prominent voices in the Church of England and the Government attempt to move the goalposts to accommodate popular thinking and embrace it under the Christian umbrella. There have been a few notable examples recently as explicit instructions of God are interpreted rather than taken literally.

Treat the law of the land to such broadminded views and penalties will be imposed, yet many claiming the name of Christ expect that God will change with the times and accept modern thinking.

Anyone wishing to acquire the Bible hope should understand that it will be on the terms of God, not their own.

Those who create their own code in the name of Christianity effectively create their own god, no more able to save them than an idol of wood or stone.

PETER KEEN, Oswestry

TEA anyone? Then where better to go than the Black Gate Tea Rooms in Oswestry to have a cuppa in the historic surroundings of a building dating from 1621. This old postcard view was loaned by postcard collector Ray Farlow. As the postcard is undated and unfranked, we can only guess at when it was taken, but for sake of argument (and feel free to correct us) we'll say it's the 1950s.

Shooting was the work of the Devil

WE are all struggling to come to terms with the massacre of innocent children in America, especially at a time traditionally of love, joy and peace.

Their Christmas, along with their hopes and dreams of future life were cruelly ended.

How could the loving God allow it to happen?

Well, God didn't do it, this is the Devil's work.

He is the father of lies and he got control of this boy's mind and turned an intelligent young man into a monster.

We will never know all the reasons but an unhappy home life, and DVDs and games glorifying violence and killing may have played a part in making fertile soil for pernicious ideas to bear poisonous fruit.

Christmastime reminds us that the light came into the world and the Devil's darkness will never overcome it.

If it is any consolation, or hope, for the desolate families, I believe that those innocent children are having a wonderful time, playing and singing with a whole crowd of happy folk in Heaven with their loving Father.

RON JONES
St Martins

Do we think GM crops are safe to grow?

OWEN Paterson MP backs GM Food Crops.

Do we really believe genetically modified food is safe? America has had terrific losses with GM crops, resistance to disease and pests breaking down, with thousands of acres lost and increasing use of chemicals.

Regretfully, the powerful biotech companies have the power to influence governments and MPs.

There is no way of controlling GM crops from contaminating the open countryside and even our gardens.

Do we really want to eat carcinogenic food?

R D ANDERSON
Ellesmere

Parish's aid saved meals

IN the Gobowen area, we had a flourishing meals-on-wheels service, which was greatly valued by the housebound and infirm.

The county council and the WRVS were of the opinion that the service was obsolete, redundant and unaffordable, so it was gradually reduced to virtual closure.

Who came to the rescue? Our local parish council.

With its encouragement, the organiser of the previous service has continued to serve, and in the current year more than 1,000 hot meals have been distributed.

In recognition of this, our parish council has deservedly received the Jan Snell award for outstanding service.

If you feel that there is something which your parish council should be doing, go and bend their ear.

JOHN D DAVIES
Gobowen

LETTERS to the Editor

POST	FAX	E-MAIL
Readers' Letters, Oswestry Chronicle, Ketley, Telford TF1 5HU	01952 254605	letters@oswestrychronicle.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters

Cartoons show that things don't change

TRAWLING through 50 years of Giles cartoons reveals the fact that nothing changes. Half of the country is still three feet underwater most of the time, the NHS is still in debt, gas and electricity and petrol prices go up monthly.

Our prisons are still full, our hospitals still dirty and our schoolchildren can neither read, write nor add up. Fifty years on and we are still ruled by incompetent and greedy politicians who are still overseen by incompetent and greedy peers.

At least one airport is on strike and another pop group is emigrating for tax reasons. There is still nothing but dross on the television and that Wydell fella is still going on about the European Union in the paper.

BOB WYDELL
Oswestry

Help might be at hand with fuel bills

AS the weather gets colder and households turn up their heating, many will be worrying about how to pay their energy bills.

However there is help out there, which is why I'm encouraging anyone struggling this winter to call the Home Heat Helpline on 0800 33 6699 or visit www.homeheathelpline.org.uk to see if they are eligible for help with their energy bills

I remember all too well the worry the bills I couldn't pay when I was starting out, so I have huge empathy for anyone who is struggling.

Around 15,700 households in Shropshire are eligible for some kind of help, which could include grants for insulation, new boilers, discounts and rebates.

FIONA PHILLIPS
TV presenter

Immigration limits are necessary

IN the current economic situation, even if we stop offshore tax evasion, put the brakes on the benefit gravy train, curb civic spending, muzzle the banks, everybody pays their personal taxation, we rein in MPs' expenses and we stop paying people millions to sack them – isn't this the bottom of the barrel?

When the EU enlarges and more Eastern Europeans can legally work here, will they all return home when their cheap labour is no longer utilised?

If you add other folk, who would like to avail themselves of our hard won standard of living, we must chose an equitable top limit of population and the standard of living we can sustain, and factor immigration accordingly.

D G SMITH
Oswestry

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NEWS in brief

Excavation topic for town society

THE Welshpool Society will meet next at 7.30pm on Tuesday at The Corn Exchange in Welshpool Town Hall.

The speaker will be Chris Martin of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

His talk will be on the archaeology and history of Mill Lane, Welshpool, and will include details of the excavations undertaken on the old Livestock Market site before its recent development.

There is a charge of £2 per person.

Reunion bid for panto performers

FORMER members of a society which performed the annual Welshpool pantomime in the 1960s and 70s are being urged to attend a reunion next week.

The reunion will be held at the Royal Oak, Welshpool, on Sunday at 2.30pm.

The Welshpool Pantomime Society staged nine productions between 1963 and 1972.

Group meeting

WELSHPOOL and District University of the Third Age meets on Tuesday at Church House in Church Street at 10am. At the last meeting members enjoyed a talk on Trekking in Turkey. Call (01691) 839917.

Inquiry date on windfarms

THOUSANDS of campaigners face a summer battle to stop a series of windfarms being built on unspoilt countryside, it has been revealed.

A public inquiry into the plans for the five windfarms could start on June 4 in Welshpool.

The legal battle to stop the turbines being built on the hills of north Powys has a key part to play in the fight to stop a power line and pylons being run across some of Shropshire's most beautiful countryside.

Campaigners against the pylons – which would stretch from an electricity sub-station at Cefn Coch, near Llanfair Caereinion, to the National Grid's line at Frankton between Oswestry and Ellesmere – say without the windfarms the power line would be obselete.

by Sue Austin

The Department of Energy called in the five applications, for wind farms at Llandinam, Llanbadarn Fynydd. Llanbrynmair, Llaithddu and Carnedd Wen along with a planning application for a power line from Llandinam to Welshpool.

They will all be the subject of one large planning inquiry in the summer. The chairman of Conservation of Upland Powys, Alison Davies, said the group had been told the inquiry was likely to begin on June 4.

"Of course the date could change but this is what we have been told. The venue is still to be decided, although we are calling for it to be held in Welshpool." She said the hearing was expected to last many months. The conservation body has until January 21 to put its draft objection in to the inquiry team.

"We will be linking up with other, more recently set up campaign groups to fight these wind farm applications," she said.

"We have been campaigning against wind farms for 20 years and with all the different bodies out there now, objecting to both the wind farms and the power lines, we have a wealth of skills and knowledge to fight this."

The campaigners will be employing a barrister to put their objections to the inquiry and have warned they may also have to bring in specialists to talk at the hearing.

Police in rogue trader warning

POLICE are warning residents not to fall victim to rogue traders.

Officers have had a number of complaints from people who have been contacted by individuals cold calling.

Metal theft is widely acknowledged as one of the fastest growing crime types in the UK and police forces are focusing on prevention, intelligence and enforcement through partnership working.

Sergeant Stephen Britton, of Dyfed-Powys Police, said: "We are urging members of the rural community to be vigilant following this recognised cold calling approach. Please stop and think carefully before handing over any scrap metal in these type of circumstances. In addition, it's important not to buy items or services from unsolicited vendors. If in doubt, please contact Dyfed-Powys Police or Powys Trading Standards."

If anyone has any details regarding this type of criminal activity, call 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Coffee mornings at church

THE United Church at New Street in Welshpool holds a coffee morning every Monday morning from 9am. There's a rummage and bric-a-brac sale, as well as coffee, tea and biscuits. Keeping her eye on the biscuits was eleven-year-old Megan Wyatt.

Superfast broadband for area goes live

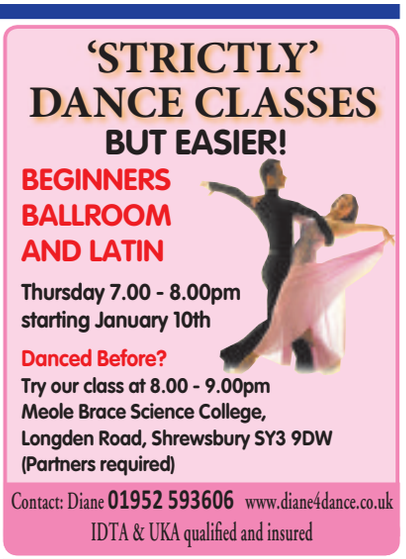
MORE THAN 3,000 businesses and 27,000 households in Mid Wales will get faster broadband in the new year thanks to a new transmitter which will go live next month.

Welshpool and the surrounding area will get 100Mbps service by the end of January after the town's specialist broadband provider, eXwavia, which is based at Glansevern, Berriew, launches its new broadcast transmitter on Long Mountain – two years ahead of Government targets.

Further broadcast points at Llandinam and Llanrhaeadr will mean that the 4Mbps – 100Mbps service will reach over 27,000 households and over 3000 businesses in north Powys, Annette Burgess, managing director, said.

Another company, Airband, has been linking Guilsfield to super quick broadband over the past year. Mrs Burgess said: "Broadband is at the heart of our daily lives both at home and in our businesses. Great broadband is a utility that we should all have access to."

The Welsh Government backed Broadband Support Scheme is still available for those suffering with speeds of less than 2Mbps. For more information, visit *www.eXwavia.co.uk*



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The business was started in 1970 by a local couple, Sonny and Ann Jones, and is now run by their daughter assisted by a very helpful and capable team of staff. Debbie and Cindy are on hand to give you any help you require with making your purchases. We are happy to lend out both fabric and carpet samples so you can make your choice in your own home. We also happily lend out mirrors, pictures, lamps, coffee tables, nests, even small chests of drawers so you can see them in situ, and thus reducing the chances of buying a white elephant!

Enough about our lovely female staff, what about the men!!? Fred, Mark and Colin have a combined experience with the company of at least 40 years, nothing is too much trouble for them. When fitting your carpet, they will empty your room, take your old carpet up and dispose of it, trim any doors that need trimming, and then replace your furniture back onto your brand new carpet. One thing to remember though is they'll never say no to a cup of tea!

When ordering a sofa or bedroom furniture, the lads are on hand to come out and check it will go in, again avoiding an expensive mistake. These days a lot of furniture on sale needs self assembly of some degree, but no needs to rush for the screwdriver because our prices include any assembly required, so you can sit back and look forward to your new purchase, hassle free. Enough about our wonderful service, what about the goods we

sell. We have an extensive range of carpets on sale from hardwearing, stain resistant Berbers to the best quality Axminsters and Wiltons, many at special promotional prices. We also have several different underlays, and will advise you on which is best to use on your floor. It you want to avoid carpet we also stock a vast range of vinyl flooring which is especially suitable for both kitchens and bathrooms, and comes in small widths, thus minimising any waste. If your budget will stretch a little further, we are also recommended Karndean stockists. Karndean is a vinyl product, which is not only cleaner, warmer and quieter but is a realistic copy of either wood boards or natural stone tiles. It can even be designed by yourself, thus making your new floor totally unique to you!

If you are finding your old sofa or chair has seen better days, you'll be amazed at our choice of new ones. Again, whether you prefer to laze on a large soft sofa or require a bit more support from your chair, we have everything you might need. Three seaters, two seaters, sofa beds, chairs, recliners, swivel chairs and a large selection of electric lift/rise recliners, we will even bring a couple of lift/rise reclining chairs out to your home for you to try if you are unable to visit the shop.

If it's your bedroom that needs a makeover, we sell a selection of beds to fit all price brackets, and Debbie and Cindy are on hand to advise you on your choice of bed. It is an important choice - you spend on average a third of your life in bed! Also how long have you had your bed? Most bed manufacturers recommend changing your bed every 10 years. We have at least a dozen bedroom furniture displays in store and if you require Fred, Mark or Colin can come out and measure up to make sure you maximise your space. Any assembling required is also free of charge.

Whether you have a separate dining room or just a kitchen, we stock tables and chairs to fit, and if you haven't got space for a dining set we even sell a supper table.

What about an attractive display cabinet to hold all those precious family mementoes and photographs, we have a substantial selection of woods and wood effects to choose from, ranging from light oak, teak, cherry, mahogany and dark oak.

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Last, but not least, we have recently opened a nursery department, selling cots, chests of drawers, children's robes, children's beds and beautiful bedding.

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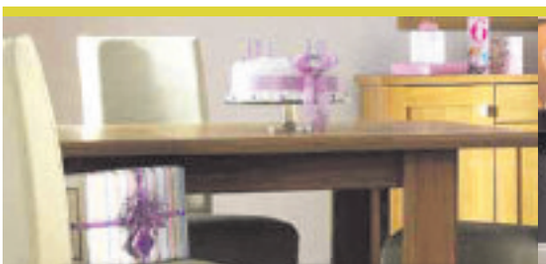

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Council is seeking views on changes

PEOPLE in the Welshpool area are being asked for their views on elements of the council tax reduction scheme, which is being introduced in April.

Powys County Council has been tasked to run the new scheme on behalf of the Welsh Government who have allowed the council to have discretion over certain elements of the new scheme.

Cabinet member for finance, Councillor Dai Davies explained: "Some 11,000 households in Powys currently receive council tax benefit but the UK government is stopping this from April. In its place they are introducing the council tax reduction scheme.

"While the Welsh Government is responsible for this scheme in Wales it has tasked local authorities with administering it.

"We have certain discretionary powers relating to war pensions, extending entitlement periods and backdating claims, and it is these issues on which we are particularly keen to hear individuals' and organisations' views."

The questionnaire is available at *www.powys.gov.uk/haveyoursay*.

Paper copies can be collected from libraries or council customer service points. The closing date for responses is midnight on Friday, January 11.

Road system 'here to stay'

A TOWN business leader has claimed shoppers and traders must accept a controversial one-way system is here to stay – despite claims it has hit profits.

Steve Kaye, chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses in Powys and a member of Welshpool Town Council, said there was no chance of Welshpool's one-way system being axed after officials at Powys County Council ruled the road layout should remain in place after a review lasting several months.

He said only 1,000 people out of the town's population of 5,000 had completed a survey seeking views about the one-way system through the town, and spoke of his frustration at the failure to bring about change.

by Chrissy Symmons

According to research carried out by Powys County Council-commissioned committee, only 37 per cent of people in the town backed the one-way system. But committee members have ruled changes to the layout – which could cost up to £20,000 – were 'unwarranted'.

The findings will be presented to the authority's cabinet in the new year.

Councillor Kaye said: "Getting rid of the one way system is not going to happen. It is staying there and that will not change.

"Welshpool Town Council is powerless to change it. All we councillors are is a voice for the people of Welshpool.

"It is frustrating for me. I am not paid to sit on the town council, I sit there because I am proud of the town."

Councillor Kaye said fears had been raised that the road was causing a drop in trade for town businesses but added the current economic climate was also to blame.

The report by Councillor Kelvyn Curry, who had led a review into the road system, said: "The implementation of the one-way system has been blamed by traders as significantly affecting their businesses. But other factors such as the opening of the Tesco store, the move of the livestock market, the recession and a greater move to internet shopping are also contributing factors."

School ranking results 'mixed'

WELSHPOOL and Llanfyllin High Schools have been ranked in Band 2 by the Welsh Government.

All secondary schools in Wales have been given a score and then placed in a banding group of between one and five.

It is an assessment of a school's performance in the academic year 2011-12, with Band 1 the best.

The annual rankings make mixed reading for local parents with Caereinion High School ranked in Band 4.

Powys County Council Leader, Councillor David Jones said: "It is very pleasing to see that two of our secondary schools have been placed in band one and that four others have improved by at least one band.

"It is the second year that the Welsh Government has issued school banding information and the first time that a Powys school has been placed in band one. It is disappointing to see that four of our schools have slipped into lower bandings."

Crafters helping church funds

A COFFEE morning was held at Welshpool Methodist Church, to raise funds for the church's upkeep. Busy knitting was June Taylor, on the craft stall. The craft group has seven to eight members and has raised more than £2,000 over the past year.

Lagging advice to stop pipe disasters

HOUSEHOLDERS in the Welshpool are being urged to wrap their water pipes this winter to avoid bursts and big repair bills.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water said hundreds of frozen water pipes burst in Powys every winter, so it is urging people to insulate them.

Peter Parry, operations director, said: "Now is the time to take action before freezing weather causes burst pipes in the home that can mean being without tap water over the Christmas holiday period.

"The Consumer Council for Water says only one in 10 people are aware of the risks of pipes freezing, and that means that thousands of Welsh homes could be landed with big repair bills.

"Four in 10 don't know if their pipes are insulated and two thirds didn't know what to do if they froze."

Water expands when it freezes, which means that pipes in garages and outhouses can burst, to be discovered when they thaw. A repair is then urgently needed, at a time when it's most difficult to find a plumber such as over the Christmas and new year holiday period, he said.

"You need to be sure that exposed water pipes are wrapped in insulation to protect them," he added.

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NEWS

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Dinner is served – despite a power cut

A SENIOR citizens' group managed to tuck into its Christmas lunch – despite a power cut.

The Ruyton & Baschurch Age UK Lunch Club went to The Talbot Country Inn in Ruyton-XI-Towns to celebrate Christmas but the pub was without mains electricity for six hours, due to maintenance work.

Owners of The Talbot contacted Scottish Power, which agreed to send a generator.

Keri Jennings, owner of The Talbot, said: "Scottish Power were really helpful and managed to get the generator to us so we could still run the kitchen."

Colin Case, spokesman for the lunch club, said: "About 36 club members enjoyed a really festive lunch. It was absolutely wonderful and we didn't even notice that we were on generator power.

"Many thanks to the team at the pub, not just for this, but for the other 11 lunches we have enjoyed this year.

"And thanks to Scottish Power – we would have had to cancel the lunch without the help."

A Scottish Power spokesman said: "We try to keep disruption to a minimum when carrying out planned maintenance. We were happy to help out."

The next lunch will be held on January 21 at 12pm. To join or find out more call (01691) 260628.

Commissioner invited to police station meeting

SHROPSHIRE'S new police and crime commissioner has been invited to a public meeting being called over the future of one of the county's police stations.

Members of Oswestry Town Council want Bill Longmore, newly-elected police and crime commissioner to address a meeting at the town's Guildhall in the new year.

by Graham Breeze

Fears have been raised that Oswestry police station, in Park Street, could close as part of cost saving plans.

Mr Longmore, who was elected to the post last month, has previously admitted some police stations could close as the constabulary seeks reduce its operating costs by £20.1 million by the end of 2015/16.

A date for the meeting has not yet been set.

Town councillor Heather Bickerton said she was 'really very concerned" and feared Oswestry police station could be closed to help make savings.

"We must stamp our feet and say Oswestry's police station must stay," she said. "We are the second biggest town in Shropshire - we cannot lose our police station.

"It is essential we keep our station here."

She has also called for the number of police officers to stay the same.

"Our officers have gone down dramatically in the past few years," she said.

"I ask councillors to stamp their feet so we can keep our officers, so they don't take any more away from us, and keep our police station."

Town clerk David Preston said councillors wanted to hold a meeting with the commissioner early in the new year with a section in it for the public to ask questions.

Speaking over worries that the police station at Market Drayton could close, Mr Longmore said the force was having to look at all options.

But he said: "Before any decisions are made over things like police stations, I want to fully consult with the local community."

He said that if there were to be any potential closures, announcements would be made in two or three months.

Chief Constable David Shaw said the force had to look at all the police buildings and see if they were good use of money.

Brothers show off tribute at rail event

A MODEL Railway show organised by the Borders Model Railway Club was held at Llandrinio Village Hall between Christmas and New Year to help raise funds for the building of club layouts. With their tribute to the Tip Recovery in Snailbeach, near Shrewsbury, in the 1920s, are brothers John, left, and David Holland, from Shrewsbury. *Picture: Simon Williams.*

Shrek and Cinderella mash-up a big hit

A STAGE production organised by students which featured music from hit film Shrek and children's pantomime favourite Cinderella has proved a hit.

Shrekerella was performed in front of a full house at the Oswestry campus of Walford and North Shropshire College.

The show on December 18 was organised by college travel and tourism students who also organised the refreshments for the event as part of the entertainments unit of their course.

Two students from Severndale Specialist School in Shrewsbury joined the cast of students from the Oswestry campus to perform a dance routine in the pantomime while costumes were supplied by Derwen College in Gobowen.

About £200 was raised from the sale of the tickets which were sold out at least a week before the event took place. This will now be put with the monies raised from the refreshments and raffle, and the total will be divided between Hope House Children's Hospice and the Evie's Dream charity.

Louise Gregory, travel and tourism lecturer at Walford and North Shropshire College, said: "This really has been a joint effort. We are delighted that we have received so much support from the public."

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Claire 07770957144

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5.15pm,7.15pm
Yvonne 07939475426

WEDNESDAY
Oswestry Memorial Hall
10am,12pm,5pm,
6.45pm
Jan 07769614985

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7pm
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NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

No food is banned in this slimming scheme

Advertisement feature

THE festivities are over and there is no better time to join Slimming World.

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Healthy eating is the way to start your journey and no food is banned. Slimming World has a brand new pack to give a super start to the new year.

You choose your target as Karen Morris from Just The Right Thing, in Oswestry, will tell you.

Karen, who has being a target member for four and a half years, said: "It's the best feeling ever. My mantra is nothing tastes as good as being slim feels."

Karen has enjoyed parties, holidays and meals out with the help of Slimming World's food optimising plan and has remained a target member.

Karen joined Slimming World five and a half years ago, after a photo made her do something about her weight.

Following the eating plan, she lost two stone to enable her to enjoy wearing some of the lovely clothes she sells in her shop.

She said: "Everyone is there to help. Members who stay lose more weight. The best feeling is getting your target and knowing you can keep the lbs off while saving pounds as you no longer have to pay."

Karen believes that the Slimming World Plan's healthy meals become a lifetime habit.

Karen is a member with Jan Evans who runs the Monday group at Chirk as well as groups on Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall Oswestry.

Karen Morris, from Just The Right Thing, a regular at Slimming World.

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How you can lose weight, keep fit and look fantastic

Advertisement feature

THE Lion Quays Country Club near Oswestry is different.

Yes, there's an exclusive range of lifestyle and fitness options on offer enabling you to get the most from your leisure and relaxation time. And yes there's a mix of world class facilities on offer.

But the Lion Quays Country Club also has a team of experts on hand to provide you with inspiration, motivation and fitness plans to suit your own personal goals.

But, of course, you know this already, and that's why there are only a limited number of gym memberships available.

"We love it when you get the most from your membership," said a spokesman for the Lion Quays Gym Team.

However, don't just take their word for it. Members have been sending in their inspirational stories, sharing their personal triumphs.

It seems the Country Club Membership is much more than a simple gym membership, it's more a lifestyle.

Visit *www.lionquays.com/inspirationalclubmembers* and find your inspiration.

Instructor Laura Evans keeps a close eye on Teri Jackson's measurements at the Lion Quays, near Oswestry.

Saving

As well as extensive facilities and a fantastic range of studio fitness classes, you also benefit from some great discounts available across Shropshire Leisure Group businesses.

Your membership saves you pounds, and not just the calorie kind.

As a member you are entitled to some exclusive discounts across both Lion Quays Waterside Resort and also the sister complex, Moreton Park.

Your membership will save you £££s as members receive exclusive rates at Lion Quays Spa, alongside discounts on event tickets, restaurants and at Moreton Park Garden Centre.

To find out more about these fantastic benefits, visit *www.lionquays.com/membershipbenefits*

Joining

Don't waste your time and money on cheap gym offers … lose weight, get fit, feel great, look fab.

All the support and motivation you need can be found at Lion Quays Country Club.

And on top of all this, if you join in January you'll benefit from a money back guarantee.

The team are so confident they can help you get results, they are offering new members a free personal training package worth over £112.

If you don't see the results you want in the first four weeks, they'll give you a full refund.

Call the team today on 01691 684400 or visit the website for more details – *www.lionquays.com/youareworthit*

There has never been a better time to try the Lion Quays Country Club.

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With ever increasing busy lifestyles it is often difficult to fit in an effective fitness routine.

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*One per client. For use in January only

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DATES & TIMES

Wednesday Shrewsbury Starts Jan 9th
9.30-10.30 St Giles Church Hall, Sutton Way, SY26EH
1.30-2.30 Bodytech Gym, 20A-21 Mardol, SY11PU
6pm-7pm Roman Road Sports Centre, Longden Rd, SY39DW

Thursday Oswestry Starts Jan 10th
9.30-10.30 Leisure Centre, Shrewsbury Rd, SY114QB
12.30-1.30 Bodytech Gym, Salop Rd, SY112NR
8.15-9.15pm Leisure Centre, Shrewsbury Rd, SY114QB

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NEWS

01691 668094

Youngsters line up for community carols fun

by Graham Breeze

MORE THAN 100 youngsters in Oswestry took part in a community carol service.

Musical performances were given by the Marches School choir, staff choir, staff band, school band, Marches drama students and primary school choirs at the event at St Oswald's Parish Church in Oswestry, which was led by Reverend Simon Thorburn.

The church was packed with family members, staff, students and members of the local community.

Anthony Coupe, director of performing arts at the Marches School, said: "The service was a great celebration of young talent and the sense of communal celebration was further enhanced by the presence of the choirs from local primary schools including Whittington, the Meadows, Morda, Holy Trinity and Trefonen.

"It was great to see so many performers thoroughly enjoying the evening," he added.

"Our thanks go to everyone involved and to family and friends who are always so supportive."

The Marches School performing arts department has also taken part in the Lions Bursary Event and the Networks Event – both at the Ironworks – Oswestry's Christmas lights switch-on and the town's Rotary club's Tree of Light ceremony.

Marches Staff Choir.

The Meadows when more than 100 youngsters in Oswestry took part in the community carol service.

Morda Primary School Choir.

Bracken clearance opens up common

A BORDER beauty spot could be a good hunting ground for wild bilberries in future after undergoing a transformation.

Bracken that has dominated the north common of The Old Racecourse in Oswestry for many years was recently cut down as part of a management project by Shropshire Council's outdoor recreation service, in partnership with Oswestry Racecourse Management Association, local residents and commoners.

The work has opened up the common and made it easier for walkers to enjoy.

Racing took place on the common in the early 1700s with horses racing around a two mile-long figure of eight-shaped track that straddled the road from Oswestry to Llansilin.

Thousands of people would travel to the course for the three-day race meetings with the horses doing two loops of the figure of eight track. The remains of the old, stone grandstand are still there.

The racecourse remained popular for 70 years but gradually drinking, gambling and bad behaviour got out of hand and the arrival of the railways meant race meetings could be held further afield. The last meeting took place in 1848 and the course was abandoned.

Staff are donating party cash to hospital

STAFF from a town store gave up their company Christmas party and donated the money which would have been spent on the festivities to sick children.

Workers from the Wilkinson store in Oswestry decided to use the money to buy toys for the children's ward of the Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

The 32-strong team donated £320 to the hospital and the money has been spent on a variety of toys and craft supplies to keep the children entertained this Christmas.

The team visited the hospital to deliver the gifts and see hospital staff and patients.

After the visit, Duncan Tipton, store manager at Oswestry, said: "The hospital is particularly close to the team's hearts and so we were keen to make the donation.

"We're sure the toys and craft materials donated will be greatly appreciated and will hopefully bring a little festive cheer to the hospital this Christmas."

Bingo fundraiser

THE Friends of Ysgol Gynradd Llanfair Caereinion will hold a fundraising bingo evening on January 11 in the school hall at 6.30pm.

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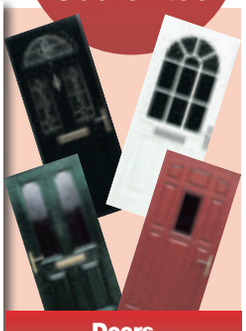

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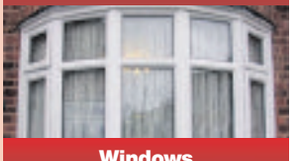

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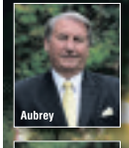

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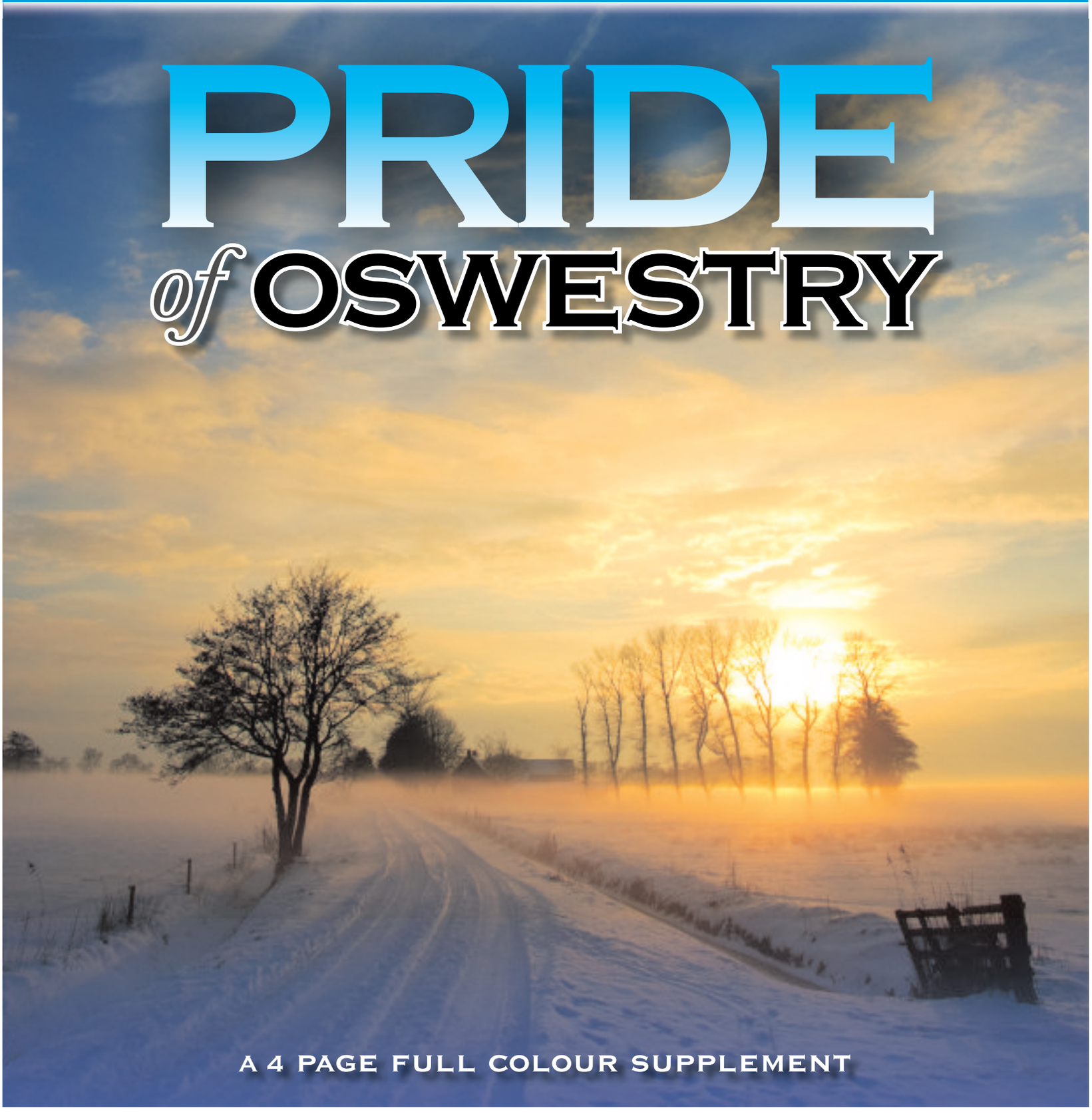

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PRIDE of OSWESTRY

Great eco way to keep warm as winter closes in

Gill Sanderson, of Sanderson's Eco Fuel.

WITH winter closing in all around us and the days getting colder, the heart-warming image of cosying up to a roasting hot fire comes to mind.

One company in Four Crosses is bringing this image to life in a new unique and eco-friendly way.

Sanderson's Eco Fuel manufacture high quality, long-burning eco friendly wood fuel briquettes that will keep you warm throughout the cold months, without worrying about creating a large carbon footprint.

The briquettes are completely natural and additive free, made from compressed clean, dry (less than eight per cent moisture content), untreated waste wood shavings and dust.

The extreme pressure produces lignin, a natural component of wood, it solidifies and binds the briquettes together, they are virtually smokeless, ideal for open fires, wood burning/ multi-fuel stoves and chimineas.

The briquettes generate extreme heat and each will burn for between 90 minutes and four hours, depending on the appliance and amount of air flow.

For details or to order phone 01691 830075 or visit www.sandersonsecofuel.co.uk. Delivery is free within a 20 miles radius of the workshop.

Developer has homes for sale in town centre

David Howell, of Primoris Homes, with an award for Cambrian Mews.

PRIMORIS Homes building contractors and developers was established in 2000 and has since developed an enviable reputation for the building of quality modern houses, barn conversions and home extensions.

One of its latest projects is the development of a grade II-listed mill, the building was fashionably converted into twelve contemporary apartments.

Primoris is responsible for the creation of Cambrian Mews, six brand new three-bedroom townhouses situated on Gobowen Road in Oswestry.

At this location there remain two three-bedroom properties for sale. Each home has been sympathetically designed to compliment the surroundings, each with an individual and traditional character.

Oswestry Civic Society liked the design of the buildings so much they awarded Primoris Homes a commendation award at the end of 2012.

There have been two well-attended open days and the houses have received rave reviews. Each property has a rear garden and off road parking space.

Cambrian Mews is ideally placed, its central location within Oswestry makes for convenient access to amenities including supermarkets, public transport, the medical centre and a school.

If you would like to view the properties at Cambrian Mews contact Primoris Homes on 01691 671091.

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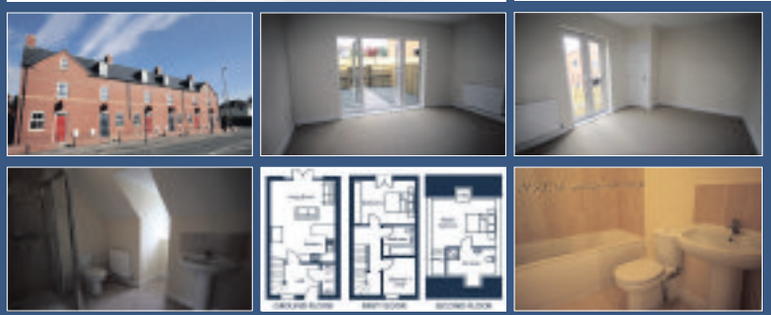

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PRIDE of OSWESTRY

Car sales and repairs always at your service

THE KC JONES Motor Group is conveniently located in the centre of the bustling market town of Oswestry.

The proprietors, Keith and Carolyn Jones, live in the town and are very proud of their heritage.

The tremendous success of the company since its inauguration in 2001 is due to the highest professional standards, fabulous customer service and the warm welcome afforded to everyone.

Keith and Carolyn wish to thank all their customers, past and present, for their loyalty and support. They reiterate that customers are always assured of a most generous welcome so please do not hesitate to call in and see them.

KC Jones Car Sales opened their showroom doors on August 2, 2010, as a 'sister' company to KC Jones Motor Repairs. Both companies are located on the same site in Oswald Road, Oswestry.

Numerous sales have been achieved to existing customers and more and more new customers are visiting the company showroom and used vehicle parks, attracted by the fabulous reputation and seven-days-a-week showroom opening times.

The sales team, managing director Keith Jones, manager Richard Harper, salesman Vince Hughes and professional motor vehicle valeter Mike Thomas, are delighted at the fantastic car sales results.

The company's objective is always to give every customer the 'best service they will ever get'. This is true both for car sales and motor repairs.

K C Jones in Oswestry.

KC Jones Car Sales' policy is always to be led by customer demand and the company takes great pride in constantly sourcing some of the very best low mileage vehicles in the country.

The showroom is always a delight to visit due to the sheer quality of the stock and the highest possible valeting standards.

The professional ability to source almost any make and mark of vehicle in an expeditious manner, and market leading finance packages, creates the ultimate in a customer sales service.

The company sales ideology is to provide a friendly and informative environment where all vehicles are priced competitively and presented in an immaculate manner.

KC Jones Car Sales' backup and after sales service is second to none, and all the cars which are sold also carry the exclusive company warranty for complete peace of mind.

Servicing and maintenance are, of course, carried out by the repair centre on the same site.

The KC Jones car repair workshop employs highly qualified and well motivated staff, providing all the services customers would expect from a leading modern garage using the latest sophisticated technology. The staff are qualified on all brands of motor vehicles.

Due to the frequency of the change over of sales stock, and to prevent any disappointment, customers are advised to check the website before visiting the showroom, by going to *www.kcjonescarsales.co.uk*

Or call (01691) 238987 for the latest information.

Plumbing and electrical expertise all on one site

Oswestry Electrical and Plumbing Factors showrooms at Mile End Business Park.

FOUNDED in 1990 and based at Mile End Business Park Oswestry Electrical & Plumbing Factors offers a complete range of electrical and plumbing goods.

Supplying both the trade and domestic markets, Oswestry Electrical and Plumbing Factors can offer you anything you might require to carry out electrical, plumbing, heating installation or repairs.

Over 60 bathroom displays are on show, spread over two floors, to suit budget or designer demands along with a wonderful display of tiles, lightings and fires.

A vast array of components and spares stores behind the scenes include complete heating systems, water treatment systems, smoke detectors, cables, switches, fuses, washers, pipes, taps – the list is endless.

Oswestry Electrical & Plumbing Factors is the main distributor for some of the products on offer and the sales distributor for others and the friendly counter staff are able to obtain almost everything you are likely to need in the electrical ad plumbing field.

One area of the showroom is designated to a superb range of kitchens and whether you want to spend £1,000 or £25,000 on your kitchen you will receive expert advice from our designers who will either visit your home for a consultation or produce your ideal kitchen with your measurements and ideas, using computer generated designs. For more information visit www.EOPF-ltd.co.uk or email sales @EOPF-ltd.co.uk

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PRIDE of OSWESTRY

Land Rover specialist meets all driver needs

Tim Gibbs and Ruth Hutchings in the parts department at McDonald Landrover in Oswestry.

SUCH is the reputation that McDonald Landrover has built up at Oswestry, the company now offers services to owners of other makes of 4x4.

Fully trained staff are now in place as the business expands to accommodate increased demand.

"We have taken on new staff who are experienced and trained on other makes and we have invested in the very best diagnostic equipment," said Rupert Astbury, at the Mile Oak Industrial Estate site.

The business was purchased in 2001 as a small parts supply operation and moved to the current larger premises in 2002, opening the workshop with one mechanic.

The business now has five people in the workshop, three on parts and one in the office. Parts stockholding is over £100,000 and any part that is not on the shelf can be obtained for the next day.

McDonald Landrover also has a thriving website shop, letting customers buy what they need online.

The workshop staff have a wealth of experience backed up by the latest vehicle- specific diagnostic equipment, meaning any problem on any Land Rover from 1948 to the present day can be worked on.

Servicing is undertaken using genuine Land Rover service parts, ensuring that all vehicles still within their warranty period receive the correct work.

For further information contact McDonald Landrover at Mile Oak Industrial Estate, Maesbury Road, Oswestry, on 01691 657705.

Leading golf centre's driving on to the top

An aerial shot of Mile End Golf Club.

HAVING farmed on the outskirts of Oswestry since 1956 the Thompson family started diversification of some of their land into a golfing venue at Mile End in the early 1990s.

From the beginnings as a 12 bay driving range a full length nine hole golf course was developed and opened on June 6, 1992.

Due to the success of this a further nine holes was completed in early 1995 and the full 18 hole course opened on May 18, 1996 by which time a modern clubhouse was also available.

The golf course covers more than 135 acres, and includes a number of water features, notably the third, eighth & 17th holes which have greens protected by large pools.

The longest hole is the par 5, 542 yard 14th, complete with it's two-tiered green.

The 15,000 trees planted on the site have had a noticeable impact on the development of the golf course, as well as changing the aspect of the surrounding countryside for the better.

The opening, in 2010, of Shropshire's only two-tier driving range along with an indoor custom club-fitting and tuition room means Mile End is now recognised as the area's most complete golfing centre.

Another development is the recent recruitment of head PGA Professional James Davies who spent more than four years as a specialist custom-fit expert for the club manufacturer Mizuno.

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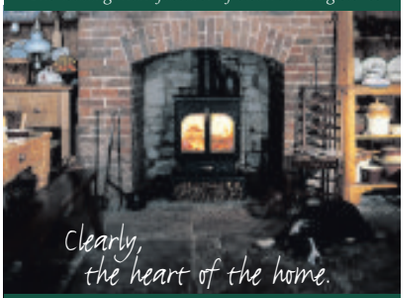

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Family Announcements

Deaths

JONES

Susan

nee Lea

Passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by her Family on December 23, 2012, aged 43 years.

Much loved Wife of Clive and Daughter of Edward and the late Patricia Lea.

She will be sadly missed by her pet dogs Nellie and Dexter.

Funeral Service at St Oswald's Parish Church, Oswestry on Tuesday, January 8, at 2pm, followed by a private Cremation.

No flowers by request, donations if desired to Nightingale House Hospice, Wrexham and The Shooting Star Unit at Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

All inquiries to

DAVID DAVIES & SONS

Telephone 01691 653116.

LEE

Audrey

nee Smith

The beloved Wife of Bill. Formerly of Springfield, Shrewsbury and Hanwood. On December 24, 2012, aged 86 years.

Sadly passed away at Ottley House, after a short illness. The much loved Mother of Colin, Graham, Richard, Jillian, Stephen, Andrew, Patrick and Joanne, loving Mother-in-law to Fran, Lesley, Rob, Jen, Sue, Les, Roger and the late Von and a much treasured Grandmother and Great-Grandmother.

Service at Shrewsbury Crematorium, on Wednesday, January 9, 2013, at 2.30pm.

No flowers by request. Donations if wished to the Macular Society, for which purpose a collection box will be provided at the Crematorium.

Inquiries please to

CLIVE PUGH
Funeral Director
95, Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6BD
Telephone: 01743 244644

POWELL

William

(Bill)

Passed away peacefully at home on December 22, 2012, aged 77 years.

Much loved Husband, Father and Grandfather.

Funeral Service at St Philip and St James Parish Church, Morton, on Tuesday, January 8, at 10.30am, followed by a private Cremation.

Family flowers only, donations if desired to The British Heart Foundation.

All inquiries to

DAVID DAVIES & SONS

Telephone 01691 653116.

SHROPSHIRE STAR

Family Announcements

To place your announcement you can either call 01952 244244, or fax on 01902 713146 or email karen.hughes@shropshirestar.co.uk

If by fax or email, please remember to include an address and contact number.

Acknowledgements

GRIFFITHS

Dilys

The Family of Mrs Dylis Griffiths would like to thank Relatives and Friends for their kind messages of sympathy following their sad loss and for the donations received and also thanks to David Davies and Sons and Rev Pam Powell for conducting the Funeral Service.

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NEWS

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College students visit police HQ

STUDENTS from a college have enjoyed a look around West Mercia Police's headquarters in Worcestershire.

Pupils from Walford and North Shropshire College in Oswestry studying public services spent a day at Hindlip Hall.

Their tour started with a visit to the force's dog section where they saw a demonstration on how the dogs and officers work together to apprehend violent criminals.

A highlight of this section was seeing how the teams would deal with a man armed with a shotgun.

Next they visited the firearms school to learn about police firearms training, including the use of more benign options such as the Taser and the baton gun.

They also visited the indoor range and the virtual reality video-training area.

Next on the list was a whistle-stop tour of the forensics department where they watched fingerprint experts and laboratory staff at work, examining prints and other marks recovered from crime scenes.

The force control room was last on the list.

Here the group saw how the thousands of public calls for assistance are handled 24 hours a day.

Tom McCudden, 19, from Four Crosses, said: "It was very educational and gave us an insight into what the police do on a day to day basis."

Homes bid agreed despite objections

by Graham Breeze

A BID to build an affordable housing estate near Oswestry has come to fruition after three years of planning and despite concerns from dozens of residents.

The Meres And Mosses Housing Association says the 18 homes at Park Hall near Oswestry will help bring much needed affordable accommodation to North Shropshire.

Shropshire Councillors gave the go-ahead to the plans despite objections from some villagers and a 68-name petition.

The scheme was conceived three years ago.

The report recommended approval for the scheme and said: "The provision of affordable housing is a key strategic priority for Shropshire Council and we are making the site available to Meres and Mosses Housing Association specifically for this purpose.

"The scheme was initially conceived by the council in July 2009 as part of a wider project looking to promote and stimulate the development of affordable housing on planning 'exception sites' for local people in the villages of the former Oswestry Borough Council area.

"In addition to meeting local housing need, the scheme at Park Hall is also an example of the council 'leading from the front' on the provision of exception site land for affordable housing in an effort to show landowners in other villages that they can do the same."

The report added: "A petition signed by 68 local residents objecting on the basis that the site is not appropriate for the provision of affordable housing and the proposal should be for a site closer to Whittington village has been received.

"Concern is also expressed about traffic and parking issues."

Resident Michael Edwards wrote: "We all feel that not only will this put extra congestion on an already pot holed and narrow road, especially when buses come through, but will also spoil the rural feel to the area."

Students in make and bake event for charity

STUDENTS in Oswestry have raised cash for charity after organising a coffee morning.

More than £75 was raised after entry level and level one BTEC Vocational students at Walford and North Shropshire College held a make and bake event.

It took place at the Oswestry Campus in aid of Hope House and Macmillan Cancer Support.

The group decorated the kitchens, organised music and made and served refreshments. They also made and displayed posters and leaflets to publicise the event throughout the college.

The fundraiser helped them with their course and allowed them to demonstrate things they had learned.

Collette Dowling, learning support assistant, said: "We all really enjoyed it, staff and students together.

"It was very festive, very well attended, the students raised money to help others and had a lot of fun at the same time."

For more information about courses at Walford and North Shropshire College please visit www.wnsc.ac.uk or call (01691) 688000.

Fundraising drive

John Gentle at Caxton Pharmacy.

STAFF at an Oswestry pharmacy have launched a charity fundraising drive to help people in their own home after a stay in hospital.

John Gentle and his team at Pharmacy@Caxton will be holding a series of fundraising events to raise money for the British Red Cross Care in the Home service.

The Red Cross helps thousands of people after a short stay in hospital and aims to prevent unnecessary hospital stays by providing support and care in people's homes.

Mr Gentle, who runs the pharmacy next to The Caxton Surgery off Oswald Road and holds the Charter Award for his service and contribution to pharmacy after serving for 24 years, said it was a vital service which many of his customers could benefit from.

"Volunteers give up their time to support people when they return home from a short stay in hospital which helps them to settle back into a normal routine.

"That person can then regain their confidence and independence but without that volunteer they may not have otherwise have been able to do so," Mr Gentle said.

"We have seen the work of British Red Cross volunteers here at the pharmacy as they come and collect prescriptions so hopefully our fundraising efforts will ensure that service is supported financially to fund expenses."

Recycling bags changes after collection introduced

POWYS County Council is to stop issuing replacement recycling bags from the council's customer service points.

The council said that since most of the main towns in Powys now had recycling and waste kerbside collection service, the issuing of bags meant extra unnecessary costs.

Householders who were still on the recycling bag scheme that required replacement recycling bags for paper, card and textiles or plastic and cans could now obtain a yellow 'more recycling bags please' label from their nearest customer service point.

"This label should then be stuck onto your recycling bag when it is put out for collection, which will alert the crews that replacement bags are required. The crews carry a supply of these bags on their vehicles and will issue them straight away," a spokesman said.

"The supply of these bags has incurred an extra cost for the council as the same quantity are still being provided despite the new kerbside recycling collection service using boxes being rolled out to over half the households in Powys. In an effort to reduce this cost it has been agreed that these bags will no longer be provided at customer service points for anyone to pick up."

"We would like to thank householders for their recycling efforts and hope that they will continue to reduce, reuse or recycle waste wherever possible, particularly during the festive period."

Town cafe wins praise

PEOPLE with dementia and their carers say a monthly cafe in Oswestry has been a lifeline.

Oswestry Dementia Cafe celebrated its first anniversary last week with games, a lunch and a visit from the Mayor, Councillor Martin Bennett.

It meets in the Walford Davies Suite in Oswestry Guildhall on the last Friday of the month from 11am to 1pm.

Carer Sylvia Puente said: "It provides useful information, and t is nice to meet people in similar situations and get things off my chest."

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Ty Dorothy Hughes House is managed by a group of dedicated trustees and committee members, and is run by a housekeeper and her staff. The house offers seven well-appointed bedrooms, all with modern en-suite facilities. A stairlift is provided.

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Ty Dorothy Hughes House in Welshpool.

Friends and family are welcome to visit when they wish and to also attend functions held at the house. Residents are free to come and go, but our committee also arranges visits and events throughout the year, which are much enjoyed.

Ty Dorothy Hughes House provides a wonderful home in a most caring environment, and at very competitive rates. For more details call (01938) 556084, e-mail *contact@dorothyhughes house.org* or visit *www .dorothy-hugheshouse.org*

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Stunning seasonal images caught on camera by local photographers

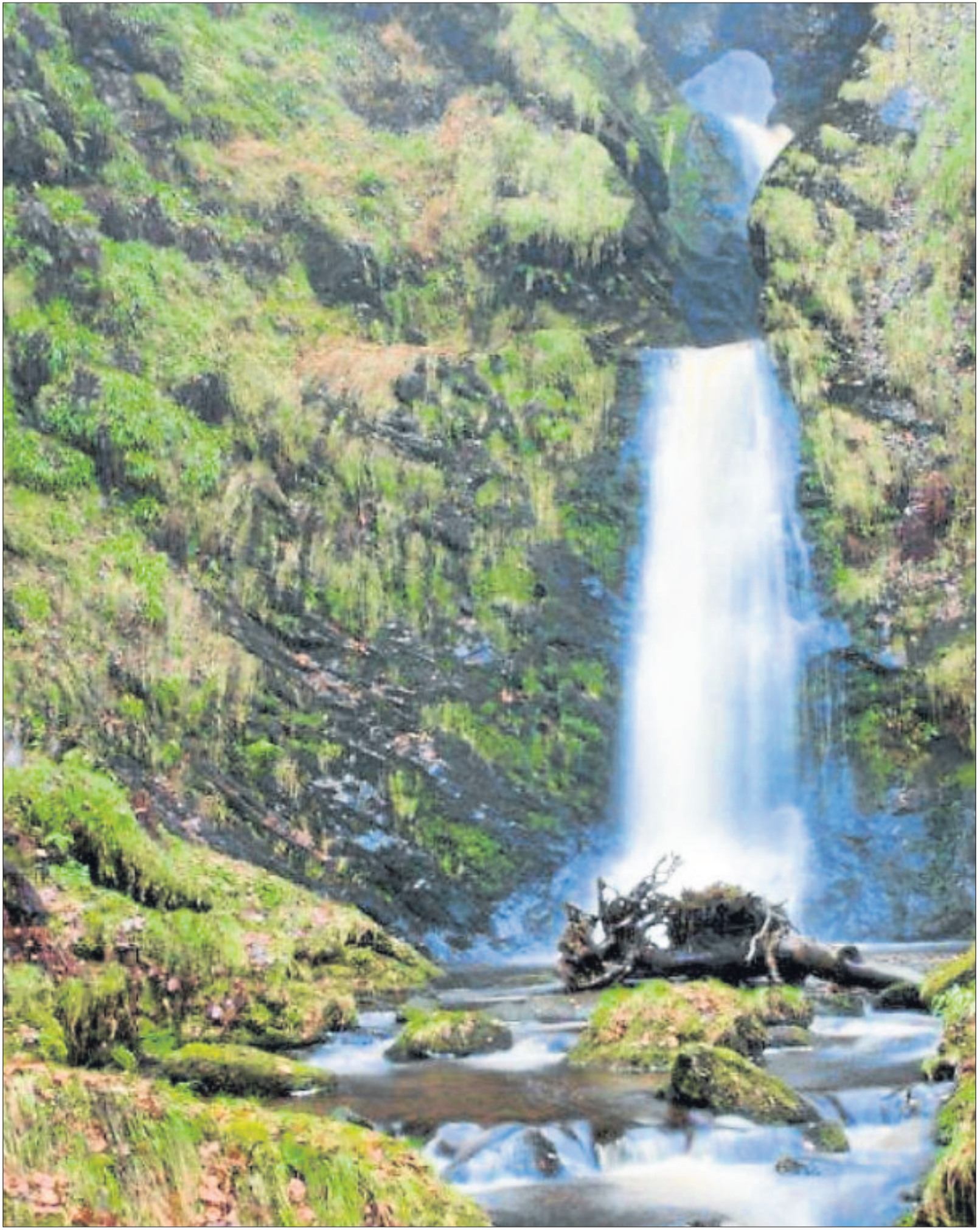
Members of Oswestry Photographic Society and Welshpool Camera Club have supplied us with some of their stunning work for publication and we are delighted to publish some of their images this week.

This picture of Welshpool covered by the heavy snows of last winter was taken by Colin Rogers of Welshpool Camera Club.

Mr Rogers also captured this spectacular image of a frosty Powis Castle and parkland.

Canal Reflections at Maesbury taken by Oswestry Photographic Society member Jane Dibnah.

The last light of winter was captured in this image above Oswestry by Photographic Society member David Slaughter.



Eva Robinson, of Oswestry Photographic Society, captured this spectacular shot at Llanrhaeadr Waterfalls.

Sufferer forms help group for others with depression

AFTER suffering from depression for many years Kathleen Jones has decided to start a support group to help others with the illness.

The 64-year-old knows what it is like to be swamped by the darkness of depression so is excited to be able to share her experiences and help others.

The new group will be held at Betty's Bazaar and tea room in English Walls every Monday from 10.30am starting on January 7.

An evening group on Mondays will also be held at Radio Cafe, in Beatrice Street, and she has backing from national charity, Depression Alliance and Age UK.

Kathleen was born and raised in the Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent, but has travelled the world and lived and worked in America.

When she was four years old, without reason or explanation, she was institutionalised because of ill health.

"I didn't understand why I was being abandoned and that I was being sent away because of ill health," she said."I was allowed home at 12 years old and I left home at 16. I travelled around the country and worked summers in Cornwall and winters in Scotland."

When she was 24 she married and had a daughter. She said: "The relationship became abusive so I took my daughter and left, even though it meant being homeless with my child.

"I made steady progress in my life after that. I bought my own home, raised my daughter as a single parent and even had my own business – a bakery."

Her daughter left home when she was 17 years old and Kathleen decided to travel.

"I emigrated to America and set up my own bakery and tea shop in Las Vegas" she said. "As a complete contrast I later worked within a hospice environment as a bereavement co-ordinator and assistant chaplain. I also nursed people out of this life and into the next."

In 2002, her granddaughter was born and Kathleen travelled back to Wales to spend six months with her daughter. Three years later, she moved back to the UK for good.

She married for a short time but her husband was very troubled because of his alcohol addiction. "Once again I found myself homeless and spent a short time in a women's refuge," she said.

Today she lives in the Oswestry area having started a new life. She has started the support group to help others and is calling it Inspiration Blue.

She said: "Throughout my life I have struggled with depression. When it comes it is like someone has hit you over the head. It comes unbidden."

She added: "Support groups and counselling have helped me through some of the worst patches of my life. I have decided to become proactive and help others.

"There really is no reason to be a victim of your own life and allow depression to rule every action and reaction.

"In the words of Charles Dickens; 'you can become the hero of your own life'."

For more details about the support group, contact *inspiration.blue@yahoo.co.uk*

Kathleen Jones has started up a support group.

Chance to sign up for band practice

PEOPLE wanting to join a training band in the new year are invited to rehearsals in a village near Oswestry.

Ifton Colliery Band, in St Martins, has a new training band. It meets on Wednesdays at St Martins Community Centre starting at 6.15pm until 7.30pm.

A spokesperson said: "Are you a complete beginner who wants to learn to play, or maybe you've played before and want to improve?

"Children aged seven years and upwards and adults are welcome to join us. Your first taster session is free and if you decide to join it's £2 a week.

"If you don't have an instrument we have instruments available to borrow for free."

For more information call (01691) 770348 or e-mail *kingrachael9@gmail.com*

On November 18 the band won the 4th Section at the Northern Open.

Jobseekers tips

A COLLEGE will be visiting a job club in Oswestry to explain options to jobseekers. Walford and North Shropshire College will hold information sessions at Oswestry Library Work Club tomorrow (Friday) from 10.30am until 11.30am. Call (01691) 677388.

Advice on offer for gadget novices

GADGET guru is coming to Oswestry to help teach people how to use their new hi-tech computer gifts.

If the new iPad has created confusion or the Windows has left people scratching their heads then they can visit Oswestry library for help.

Staff, volunteers and representatives from Micro Plus Computers will be holding a Gadget Guru event on January 23. They will be offering one-to-one sessions to help take the worry out of coping with a new gadget.

Martin Taylor-Smith, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member responsible for information and communications technology, and Steve Charmley, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member responsible for libraries, said they hope the event will be popular.

Appointments can be booked from 3pm-7pm on (01691) 677388 or by e-mailing *oswestry.library@shropshire.gov.uk*

Prayer breakfast

CHURCHES Together Oswestry and District will hold its next prayer breakfast on Saturday. The prayer meeting will be held from 8am at the home of John and Jill Field at Lower Hafod, Hampton Park, Oswestry. Call (01691) 659385.

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FEATURE & NEWS

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Food bank volunteers raise cash to expand

ORGANISERS of Oswestry's foodbank have raised cash to help their plans for expansion into the border and rural areas.

Volunteers from Oswestry and Border Foodbank were bag-packing at Sainsbury's in the run up to Christmas to raise funds.

The town foodbank service was started in November 2011 by members of Churches Together Oswestry and District to help those in poverty by giving them food parcels.

Now organisers want to deliver their service to villages and to people living in the rural areas around Oswestry.

Phil Simpson, from the foodbank, said: "We have had in our minds from the beginning that the foodbank would be a service for Oswestry and the borders. We have always had a heart to reach out and serve the rural communities.

"We are aware there is a lot of rural poverty. We feel the challenge of 2013 is to make sure that part is reached.

"We have to work out how best to do that."

He said volunteers are developing plans to deliver food to other areas and have already seen people being referred to them.

"We are talking to a growing group in Ellesmere wanting food," he added.

Scott's words on nature a treasure

JUST over 100 years ago, a team of five men were trekking through the snow and ice. Temperatures dipped well below freezing and the wind ravaged the party. Their goal was the South Pole and they were in a race for their lives against the Norwegians.

But they didn't win and nor did they return. I am of course referring to the ill-fated 'Terra Nova' expedition lead by Captain Robert Falcon Scott. But as Scott himself noted some three months later at the end of their desperate last march, frost-bitten and half-frozen in his tent, '. . . these rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale'.

His writings, apologies at having failed in their primary expeditionary task (but not their scientific ones), are best remembered for their stoic bravery and British-ness: "Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman."

Yet as we review a hopefully joyous festive season and our children enjoy their toys, it is a handful of words Scott wrote in his last letter to his wife, that stick with me. "Make the boy interested in natural history if you can; it is better than games."

'The boy' was of course his son, the late Sir Peter Scott. I was lucky enough to be invited at the end of last year, to exhibit my work at Peter Scott's home, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge.

An honour indeed, for I have always seen Slimbridge as the home of wildlife and wildlife art.

The reserve, now the flagship sanctuary amongst nine in the UK, was where Sir Peter used to attract waterbirds and wildfowl to his land and paint them as they flew and paddled, waded and fed.

ON THE WILD SIDE
with
Ben Waddams

One of the key species to have profited from Slimbridge has been the Bewick's Swan, a majestic, yet small and endearing animal.

They were bumbling around the reserve as I went to collect my artwork the other week and it was a privilege to see them there. However, on my return to Shrewsbury I was delighted to find a couple at Venus Pool.

And the surprises didn't stop there. Bewick's originate from Siberia, where they breed from March through to September, flying south to our balmy shores for a mild and wet winter. Venus Pool is a haven for wildlife, but how about Tesco and the Range?

'Christmas may be over, but the gifts keep coming into the New Year if you're a naturalist'

Maybe not, yet as the rowan trees around Sundorne swelled with their gaudy winter fruits, waxwings descended from their own frozen origins – Scandinavia and Iceland. It seems north Shropshire is rather a catch for more than just our regular garden birds.

Christmas may be over, but the gifts keep coming into the New Year if you're a naturalist.

Enjoy a cuppa at the Gallery Tearooms in Princess Street, Shrewsbury, and see Ben's work.

Happy New Year.

Waxwing – pen and ink by Ben Waddams.

Authority approves new care home fees

NEW fees for nursing and residential homes in Powys have been approved by the county council's cabinet.

The authority has been reviewing fees paid to some homes in the light of successful judicial reviews taken against Welsh councils by care home providers.

Cabinet member for adult social services, Councillor Rosemarie Harris, said: "Powys has a duty to provide nursing or residential care where it meets the needs of older of physically disabled people in the county and places more than 400 residents in care homes.

"The council has been reviewing the way it sets rates to ensure that it meets national policies and is fair and just for those businesses providing a valuable service to the county.

"The cost of nursing and residential care is significant with more than £10million being spent in 2011/2012.

"It is essential that the county council gets value for money but ensures that the rates paid are sufficient to maintain a viable sector in the county so there is provision in the county when needed.

"It is a delicate balancing act but I believe the new increased rates will maintain a viable nursing and residential sector at a rate that the council can afford."

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Readers tell stories of photos

"I love you because you saved my mummy," was the message in this letter Ewart Francis received out of the blue in 1978 from a six-year-old girl after saving a woman from drowning nearly seven years previously.

Youngsters at Bellan House in Oswestry all dressed up for a royal visit in 1957.

TIME for a bit of feedback which we have received from readers in relation to a couple of pictures we carried a few weeks ago.

by Toby Neal

The first concerns Ewart Francis, who was for many years a shopkeeper in Oswestry with a family bakery on Welsh Walls, which had been started by his grandfather.

He had also been the person who, in 1980, made the first approaches to the then mayor asking about the possibility of Oswestry twinning with another town – a move which led to the forging of a twinning arrangement with Combs la Ville – and was also president of Oswestry and District Chamber of Trade.

Along the way he had rescued a lady who had floated out to sea off Harlech, with the unusual upshot that she adopted a baby and named her Julie Frances in Mr Francis's honour. At the end of our account we said that if Mr Francis was still alive, he would now be 96, and that prompted Paul Francis, who is no relation, to e-mail in with some details of Mr Francis's later life.

"I first met Ewart about seven years ago when he was about 90. He was in a ramshackle old bungalow in Hengoed – about 200 metres up the Hengoed road, on the left, from Hengoed Park Nursing home. Ewart was living with his dog," says Paul. His living conditions were not good, and his 'bedroom' was a sort of wooden platform raised off the ground in his kitchen.

"To get to his bed he would haul himself up a ladder and onto this platform.

"I was introduced to Ewart because he needed someone to help him with his garden and with odd jobs.

"For a couple of years I did what I could, but he was set in his ways and everything had to be 'just so."

I think he was around 92 when I heard he had died suddenly. About a year after he died his bungalow came on the market with Halls. A developer bought the place and built a house with a turret."

Another photo we have used in recent weeks showed children at Bellan House, Oswestry, dressed up in the 1950s.

Rachel Bowd rang in to fill us in with the details: "In 1957 Oswestry School celebrated its 550th anniversary since it was founded and there was a visit by the Duchess of Kent. It was on May 29, 1957.

"Bellan House is our primary school. I'm the Old Oswestrian co-ordinator."

Flight of fancy nets prize for poet, 7

A YOUNG poet has been heralded the best in Britain for his poem about the swift.

Oswestry schoolboy Nyle Evans, aged seven, won first place in the RSPB poetry contest for young people.

His three-verse poem was chosen by Julia Donaldson, Children's Laureate and author of the award-winning book The Gruffalo, as the overall winner from the under-eights category of the Wildverse competition.

The annual contest – in partnership with the Fun Kids radio station and radio manufacturer Pure – attracted 1,850 entries from all over the UK.

It asked children and young people aged up to 19 to submit their original poems based on any aspect of nature and wildlife.

The two winning poems and eight runners-up will be recorded by pupils of a school in Bedfordshire and broadcast on Fun Kids Radio.

Julia said of Nyle's entry, Swift: "I chose this poem because, although simple, it was so successful in linking the description of the migrating swift to the emotions of the child and family.

"The poem was well shaped, and had a real sense of direction."

The pupil at Woodside School, Oswestry, won a digital radio for his efforts.

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THE ARTS 01691 668094

New venue will be added for society exhibitions

by Graham Breeze

A NEW venue is to be added to the exhibitions organised by Oswestry & District Society of Artists for 2013.

The group will stage a winter show for the first time at Willow Gallery in Oswestry. This challenging new venture will take place before Christmas next year.

The 2013 programme of activities for artists belonging to the local art society includes workshops, a critique evening, painting days, visits to galleries and three major exhibitions of members' work.

The programme secretary Christine Taylor has organised the events and has put together a varied list of events covering a wide variety of interests.

The new year kicks off with an illustrated talk by Frances Isaacs on 'Visions of Paradise', which is being held at Oswestry Memorial Hall on Wednesday, January 9 at 7.30pm. New members will be welcomed.

Other exhibitions will be held at Chirk Castle at the end of May and start of June and at the Memorial Hall, Oswestry at the end of July.

Trips are being organised to an art exhibition at Ellesmere College, the Gordale Garden Centre on the Wirral for the National Wildlife Art Exhibition and demonstrations and The Marc Chage ll Exhibition at The Tate Gallery, Liverpool.

The society will also produce its second newsletter later in the year which will be edited by Ruth Reeves.

"There is lots to look forward to in our new 2013 programme," said society chairman Sue Humphries. "We are in the splendid position of having three exhibitions next year including a new venture for us at the Willow Gallery."

Annual fees for the group are now due at £20.

Gallery show tells a tale

AN exhibition called A Winter's Tale is being shown at the Dunbabin Artspace at the Willow Gallery in Oswestry, exploring myth, folklore and the theme of winter. It features paintings, prints, drawings and textiles. The art show runs until January 14. Taking a look at the exhibition was gallery manager Anthony Smith.

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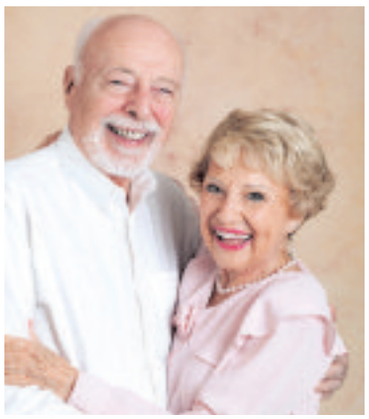
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THE ARTS 01691 668094

Charity is celebrating a decade of helping people

Catherine's going potty

POTTERY painting sessions for all the family are being held at Honey Pots in Oswestry. Call in at the shop for more details or to book a session. Taking a look at some Christmas themed ornaments was Catherine Cole from the shop. *Picture: Peter Flemmich.*

by Graham Breeze

A CHARITY is looking forward to the future as it celebrates a tenth anniversary this year.

Qube, based in Oswald Road, Oswestry, is a charity which serves the needs of the community through accessible transport services, volunteer advice and art exhibitions.

In 2013 Qube is celebrating the tenth anniversary of the volunteer bureau starting up within the organisation.

Laurel Roberts, chief officer at Qube, said: "A lot has been achieved in that time for the community of Oswestry.

"The ethos of Qube has always been to improve the quality of life for people. I'm proud to say that we achieved that over the last 10 years through our transport, care, volunteering and arts services."

Tonia Parry, also from the Qube, said: "We would like to thank all the hundreds of volunteers who have helped to support the organisation over the last decade who have given freely of their time and expertise, working really hard to benefit others.

"Qube would not be able to provide the services they do without them and they all make a real difference to peoples' lives."

Over the years the charity has had a number of projects including a Healthy Eating Animation film for young children, reminiscence and heritage projects about the area, and supporting unemployed youngsters.

It also has Dial-a-ride which offers a door-to-door service for the elderly, frail, rurally isolated, disabled or wheelchair users and now has more than 350 members using the service regularly.

As well as celebrating 10 years of its volunteer bureau it is launching New Year New Skill – Get Creative at Qube courses and workshops programme. This will offer lessons on calligraphy, embroidery, glass painting, rag rugs and Watercolour.

There will also be a range of courses to help people develop basic computer skills.

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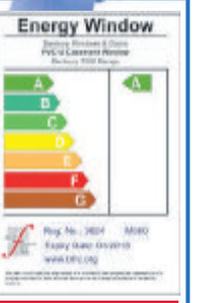

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Practical city car that delivers on economy

The Skoda Citigo has an exceptionally spacious interior

By Bob Hickman

Skoda has a range of excellent cars and none more so than Citigo, its city car.

It has very small exterior dimensions with exceptional interior space, offering ample accommodation for four adults. Add in great manoeuvrability, exceptional comfort and quite high levels of equipment, and Skoda says that the Citigo has been designed to deal with almost anything that life can throw at it.

We are living in difficult times with recession and austerity, and people are looking to see where they can save a few pennies – and in motoring we can save not pennies but pounds.

Petrol prices are continually spiraling upwards so we need to eke out more miles per gallon. The more miles per gallon, the less excise duty and insurance we pay.

The Citigo is a city car, it is a unique design and it maximises space on a very small footprint.

There is little doubt that the market for city cars is going to be the new growth area. A few years ago it was off-roaders and then SUVs, people carriers, now the marketplace is for small cars but with maximum carrying capacity. You only need to look around and you can see other manufacturers have already entered into this important market sector

The amount of space in the Citigo is very good. There is plenty of room for four adults and this contained in a vehicle a mere 3,540mm long and 1,640mm wide. I actually had a sit in the back of the vehicle with my wife and we were comfortable in the rear. We had sufficient head and shoulder room, and importantly legroom. And even allowing for the seats in a driving position that I normally occupy as a six-footer, there was still space for the rear passengers.

The boot is not over generous at 251 litres but when you drop the seats it rises dramatically. But do not overlook the fact that this is primarily a city car, it is not designed for huge luggage capacity, but it is sufficient to get the daily or weekly shopping in.

One feature that the Citigo will reward you with is its ability to find car parking spaces. Being so small, spaces that you would normally think impossible, can swallow up the Citigo.

The driving dynamics are quite entertaining for such a small car, the engine is a three-cylinder 999cc and produces 60bhp. There is also a further option of more power but the smaller derivative will enable you to reach 62mph in 14 seconds and it runs out of puff at 99mph. There is a 75bhp option available and this knocks a second off the 0-60 time and raises your top speed to about 106mph.

Fuel consumption figures claimed for both vehicles is in the region of mid-60s on the combined cycle. Phenomenal fuel figures are quoted, but as we all know these figures are achieved in laboratory conditions, but we should still be obtaining figures in the low-50s, which is exceptional.

The important CO2 figures are given as 105 and 108 respectively for the two power derivatives, so you can expect a low road fund licence, and this is another bonus to reduce motoring costs. Not quite the nil rated but not far away at a mere £20 per annum.

There are three versions available – S, SE and Elegance, entry level being the S with good, old fashioned wind-up windows, and sadly, no air conditioning. The SE is probably the derivative to go for, it benefits from electric front windows, remote central locking, manual air conditioning.

The Skoda Citigo is available in 60bhp and 75bhp engines

> "It has very small exterior dimensions with exceptional interior space, offering ample accomodation for four adults"

Central

I really do not want a vehicle anymore without central locking, with wind-up windows and without air conditioning, things that we now take for granted. So I would avoid the S level, although all the models have ABS and four air bags, and all models except the entry level have an Electronic Brake Sensor facility.

You have to make a further choice between a three-door and a five, and I think this will interest a lot of car buyers. It is always easier to get in and out of small city car when you have five doors.

My choice would be the five-door middle of the range SE. As a further sweetener towards downsizing and the Citigo, what about a five-door SE 999cc engine with an automatic gearbox? I don't think you could get a better small package.

The boot is not over generous

Skoda has introduced what they suggest is a simple pricing structure, but I do find it a little complicated. The entry level Citigo three-door starts things off at £7,630 and the top specification Citigo Elegance is priced at £10,415. Skoda then gives you a list of various options dependent on your derivative – Comfort packs, Style packs, Summer packs, Safety packs and all manner of extras that you can build into your car.

All in all, the Citigo will win friends and with Skoda's reputation now of being manufacturers of superb, reliable, quality vehicles. I see nothing but another success for the company.

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10 10	Ford C-Max 1.6 Zetec 5dr MPV, Silver	£10,695	£9,995
09 59	New Mdl Ford KA 1.3 Style, 3dr, Dive Blue	£6,695	£5,695
09 09	New Mdl Ford Fiesta 1.25 Zetec 5dr, Silver	£7,995	£7,695
11 11	New Mdl Ford Fiesta 1.25 Edge ,3dr, Met Grey	£7,995	£7,695
12 12	New Mdl Fiesta 1.6 Metal Special Edition 3dr Sports, Full Leather	£13,495	£12,995
11 11	New Mdl Ford Fiesta 1.4 Tdci Zetec Diesel 5dr, Frozen White	£9,495	£8,995
12 12	New Mdl Ford Fiesta 1.6 Tdci Titanium Econetic Diesel 3dr, White	£12,495	£11,495
09 59	Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec 5dr, Sea Grey	£8,495	£7,995
09 59	Ford Focus 1.8 Tdci Zetec Diesel 5dr, Vision Blue	£9,495	£8,995
10 60	Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec Climate 5dr, Panther Black	£7,695	£6,995
08 08	Ford Focus 1.6 Tdci Style Diesel 5dr, Avalon	£7,695	£6,995
08 58	Ford Mondeo 2.0 Tdci Ghia Diesel 5dr, Panther Black	£9,995	£9,495
11 11	Ford Mondeo 2.2 Tdci Titanium"X" Sport Top Spec 5dr Diesel, Silver	£18,495	£17,495
09 58	Ford Mondeo 2.0 Tdci Titanium"X" Top Spec Diesel 5dr, Met Blue	£9,995	£9,395
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11 11	Kia Pro-ceed 1.4i VR7 3dr Coupe', Arctic White	£8,995	£8,495
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09 09	Kia Soul Level 2 , Black	£7,995	£7,695
09 59	Kia Soul 1.6 Crdi Shaker Diesel 5dr, Vanilla	£9,695	£8,995
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12 12	Mazda CX-7 Sport-Tech Diesel 4x4(List New £26470), 4x4, Silver	£21,949	£19,998
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09 09	Ford S-Max 2.2 Tdci Titanium Diesel MPV, Silver	£14,995	£13,995
09 59	Mazda 5 TS2 Diesel 7 Seater MPV, Silver	£10,695	£9,995
	MAZDA SELECTION PETROL & DIESEL	WAS	NOW
09 59	Mazda 2 TS 5dr , Black	£6,995	£5,995
10 59	Mazda 2 Tamura Special edition 5dr , Radiant Ebony	£7,695	£7,395
09 59	Mazda 2 Tamura Special edition 5dr, Met Grey	£7,695	£6,995
09 59	Mazda 6 TS Diesel 2.2 5dr , Velocity Red	£9,995	£9,495
	OTHER MAKES & MODELS PETROL & DIESEL	WAS	NOW
07 57	BMW 318i"SE" Automatic Saloon Auto , Silver	£9,495	£8,995
07 57	Honda Civic 1.4 Dsi"SE" 3dr , Met Blue	£7,695	£6,995
09 09	Mini One Graphite 3dr, Met Grey	£8,995	£8,695
11 11	Peugeot 207 Allure 1.6 Hdi Diesel 5dr(Panoramic Roof), White	£9,995	£9,495
09 59	Volkswagen Polo 1.2 Moda 60 5dr, Met Grey	£7,695	£6,995
09 09	Volkswagen Golf 2.0 Tdi GT Diesel 5dr, Black	£11,995	£11,495
	SPORTS & PERFORMANCE	WAS	NOW
10 59	New Mdl Ford Fiesta 1.6 Zetec"S" 3dr Sports, Frozen White	£9,495	£8,495
08 58	New Mdl Ford Fiesta 1.6 Zetec"S" 3dr Sports , Panther Black	£8,695	£7,995
08 08	Maxda MX5 2.0i Sport Roadster Coupe, Met grey	£11,995	£10,995
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Telford Top 40 SUPERSAVERS

09 09	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Style 5dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£6995	£6495
09 59	Kia Picant 1.0 1 5dr a/c,cd,cl,abs,f/s/h	£5295	£4695
10 60	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Titanium 5dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,alloys,met paint	£10695	£9995
08 08	Mazda 2 1.5 Sport 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£7695	£6995
09 09	Mazda 2 1.5 ts-2 5dr a/c,cd,alloys,abs,cl,ew,m,et paint	£8995	£7995
10 60	Kia Picanto 1.1i Domino 5dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£6495	£5795
10 60	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Zetec Climate 5dr a/c,cd,abs,alloys,cl,ew	£10495	£9795
10 10	Mazda 2 1.5 Sport 3dr a/c,cd,abs,alloys,met paint,f/s/h 1 owner	£8495	£7995
10 60	Ford Fiesta 1.25 Edge 5dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint,f/s/h	£8295	£7795
10 60	Toyota Yaris 1.3 vvti TR 5dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint,alloys	£8495	£7995
08 58	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Zetec Climate 5dr a/c,cd,alloys,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£6495	£5995
09 59	Kia Picanto 1.0 1 5dr abs, cd, cl,ew,met paint ,f/s/h	£5495	£4995
10 59	Mazda 2 tamura 5dr a/c cd ew alloys met paint (special edition)		£7995
06 56	Ford fiesta 1.25 zetec climate a/c ew alloys cd met paint		£5295
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10 10	Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec Climate 5dr a/c,cd,alloys,abs,cl,ew,met paint		£7995
12 12	New Kia Rio 1 Air 1.1 Crdi 5dr cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint,a/c	£11695	£10995
12 12	New Kia Venga 2 1.4crdi 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£11695	£10995
12 12	New Kia Picanto 1 Air 3dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint ,	£7495	£6995
11 60	Ford Focus 1.616v Sport 5dr a/c,cd,alloys,abs,sat nav,met paint	£ 10495	£8995
08 08	Ford Focus 1.616v Zetec 5dr a/c,cd,alloys,abs,cl,ew,met paint		£5995
11 60	Ford Focus 1.616v Sport 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,sat nav,f/s/h	£9995	£8995
	DIESELS	WAS	NOW
10 10	Mazda 6 2.2 Td TS 163ps 5DR alloys,a/c,cd,abs,f/s/h,met paint		£10995
06 56	Ford Focus 1.8 Tdci Ghia 5dr alloys,abs,cl,ew,met paint,a/c		£5495
10 10	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Tdci Edge 5dr a/c,cd,cl,ew,met paint,f/s/h,abs,t	£8495	£7995
09 59	Ford Fiesta 1.6 tdci Titanium 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£8995	£8495
09 59	Peugout 207 1.6 Hdi-5 5dr a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint,f/s/h	£7995	£7495
11 60	Ford Focus 1.6Tdci Zetec Climate 5dr sports pack and sat nav,alloys,etc		£10495
11 61	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Tdci Zetec Climate 5dr alloys a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint,f/s/h choice of colours cost new £14740 save over £5000 , from only		£9695
09 59	Ford Mondeo 2.0 Tdci Titanium 5dr alloys,abs,cl,ew,met paint,a/c,cd		£11495
09 09	Vauxhall Corsa 1.3 eco cdti cd, e/w cl met paint, low miles	£7995	£7495
10 10	Ford Focus 1.8 tdci Titanium 5dr alloys,a/c,abs,cl,ew,met paint ,f/s/h	£8695	£7995
11 61	Ford Focus 1.6 tdci sport choice of colours 5dr a/c e/w	£12495	£10995
04 54	Fiat ulysse 7 seater diesel a/c alloys abs ew cd only 50k miles		£3995
10 10	Ford mondeo 2.0 tdci titanium auto alloys met paint climate ew cd cruise Many colours in stock to choose from		£9995
	MPV, ESTATE & 4x4	WAS	NOW
11 11	Ford Mondeo 2.0 Tdci zetec powershift 5dr estate 1 owner f/s/h		£12495
10 10	Ford S-Max 2.0 tdci Zetec 5dr mpv, 7seater, alloys,a/c,cd,abs,f/s/h	£13995	£12995
08 08	Ford Focus 2.0 Tdci Zetec Estate 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint		£8995
11 61	Kia Sorento 2.2crdi KX-2 awd 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£21995	£19995
10 59	Kia Sportage 2.0 crdi XS Auto 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint	£13995	£11995
10 10	Kia Soul Shaker 1.6 crdi 5dr alloys,a/c,cd,abs,cl,ew,met paint,f/s/h		£9995

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So many surprises in latest Chrysler 300C

The new 300C has a sweeping new design, very different to the previous

IT'S INSTANTLY recognisable but the latest 300C from Chrysler is different in just about every department.

I once told a Chrysler executive that the old 300C resembled a battleship and while he wasn't amused he didn't chastise me too much either.

The new model is anything but, with a sweeping new design and a look of total luxury that had friends asking if I was driving a Bentley. The difference is the 300C hits the road at under £40,000.

Better built, safer, even more lavishly equipped and more efficient than its predecessor, the new Chrysler 300C retains a unique position in the executive sector.

DRIVE TIME with Graham Breeze

By offering the type of engineering, design, materials and driving dynamics that European buyers expect, combined with American style, personality and value for money, the Chrysler 300C appeals to head and heart.

Unlike many rivals which offer a baffling array of engine sizes and trim levels, the new Chrysler 300C, is available here in just two versions.

The new 3.0-litre V6 turbo diesel benefits from Fiat Group Automobiles' ground-breaking MultiJet 2 technology to provide a classleading compromise.

Whether in Limited or Executive guise, the Chrysler 300C is a very well equipped car. Much of the technology that rivals sell as premium priced optional extras feature as standard equipment on the Executive model.

There's Rain Brake Support, which helps keep the brake pads dry for better stopping power in poor conditions, which is unique to this class of car. You also get ventilated front seats and heated rears, Uconnect infotainment system with Bluetooth, dual-zone climate control, an 8.4-inch touch screen display, mirrors that darken automatically to limit headlight glare, cruise control, and 20" alloy wheels.

The Executive version has a Blind Spot Monitoring (BSM) system, radar Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) and a two-panel panoramic sunroof as well as the forward collision monitoring system.

Perhaps the biggest change over its predecessor is the quality of the new Chrysler 300C. By honing every step of the design, engineering and production processes of its new executive model, the American firm has taken a giant step forward in both.

The interior has high grade materials throughout, from the redesigned Nappa leather seats to real wood panels on the dashboard.

The body is made from a variety of new materials including advanced high resistance and ultra-strong steel. The improved rigidity combined with all-new suspension means the rear-wheel drive Chrysler 300C doesn't just handle better than ever, it's also quieter and more refined too.

The more rigid construction also combines with a suite of nearly 70 electronic safety aids that ensure the Chrysler 300C offers top-class safety in a supremely stylish package.

The cabin has been designed to exude luxury. Instrument and door panels are clad with soft-touch materials chosen to meet Chrysler's strict quality goalsand the steering wheel is finished in highly polished walnut and hand-stitched leather.

A big surprise was the performance from the six cylinder CRD with a rop speed of 144mph, 0-60mph in 7.4 seconds and combined fuel consumption figures of just under 40mpg.

But the biggest surprise of all is the price with the Executive hitting the road at £39,995. The test car had tungsten metallic paint which pushed the price to £40,680.

The 300C is not just big. It's beautiful, both inside and out and handles like a dream for such a big car even on the winding roads of Mid Wales.

People often think this car is a Bentley but it costs a fraction

"Better built, safer, even more lavishly equipped and more efficient that its predecessor"

The cabin exudes luxury

BUMPER TO BUMPER

Car: Chrysler 300C
Model: 3.0 CRD V6 Executive
Price: £40,680
Top speed: 144mph
0-60mph: 7.4secs
C02: 191 g/km
Combined mpg: 39.2
Insurance Grp: 40

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2009 59 CITROEN C3 PICASSO VTR 1.6 HDi 5-door Manual. Metallic Red, 17,000 miles, one owner, FSH £7,699

2009 59 SEAT IBIZA 1.6 SPORT 5-door. Metallic Grey, 24,000 miles, FSH £6,999

2005 55 VOLVO V50 2.0 D SE ESTATE Manual. Metallic Silver, full leather, 84,000 miles £5,999

2007 57	**AUDI RS4 SALOON 6 speed,** Manual. Avis Blue Metallic, Graphite alloy wheels, full leather, sat nav, fully loaded, must be seen, 52,000 miles, FSH	£24,499
2010 10	**AUDI A4 2.0 TDi AVANTE SE** 143BHP 6 speed Manual. Metallic Silver, 64,000 miles, one owner, FSH	£13,999
2009 59	**AUDI A4 2.0 TDi SE SALOON SE 140 bhp.** Bright Red, 35,000 miles, one owner, manual 6 speed, FSH	£13,999
2010 10	**AUDI A4 2.0 TDi SE AVANT** 6-speed Manual 140bhp. Metallic Silver, 64,000 miles, FSH	£13,999
2011 11	**BMW 116 d M-Sport,** 5-door. White, Manual, 18,000 miles, £30 a year tax + duty	£15,499
2009 58	**BMW 320d SE** Coupe Auto. Platinum Bronze Metallic, one owner, 56,000 miles, FSH	£13,999
2007 57	**BMW 120d SE Coupe 6 speed Manual.** Metallic Grey, 50,000 miles, FSH	£11,999
2006 06	**BMW 318i M-SPORT CONVERTIBLE Manual,** only 38,000 miles, immoba Red, FSH	£9,999
2011 11	**BMW 320d SE 6-speed Manual 184BHP.** Metallic Red, 14,000 miles, one owner, FSH	£18,499
2009 59	**CITROEN C3 PICASSO 1.6 HDi** Metallic Red, £30 a year tax, 18,000 miles	SOLD
2009 59	**CITROEN C3 PICASSO VTR 1.6 HDi** 5-door Manual. Metallic Red, 17,000 miles, FSH	£7,699
2009 59	**CITROEN C3 1.4 HDi AIRDREAM** 5-door. Metallic Silver, 30 a year Road Tax, 1 owner	£6,999
2009 09	**FORD FUSION 1.4 TDCi ZETEC** Manual, 27,000 miles, 1 owner, £30 road tax, Metallic Blue	£7,299
2006 56	**FIAT PUNTO 1.2 DYNAMIQUE** 5-door. Metallic Blue, 20,000 miles, FSH	£3,499
2009 09	**FORD FUSION ZETEC 1.4 TDCi** 5-door. Blue Metallic, 27,000 miles, one owner, £30 a year road tax	£7,499
2007 56	**FORD FOCUS TITANIUM 1.6 Manual.** Metallic Silver, 55,000 miles	£4,999
2009 59	**FORD MONDEO TDCi ZETEC 6 Speed Manual.** Blue Metallic, 27,000 miles, 1 owner, FSH	£9999
2009 59	**KIA CEED 1.6 LS** 5-door Diesel. Metallic Blue, 33,000 miles, 1 owners	£8,499
2009 59	**KIA SOUL 2 1.6** 5-dr. 1 owner, Metallic Silver, 12,000 miles	£8,499
2005 05	**LAND ROVER FREELANDER TD4 SW** 5-door Manual. Metallic Green, only 39,000 miles, FSH	£7,999
2004 04	**MAZDA MX5 1.6 Manual,** only 38,000 miles, Metallic Silver, FSH	£4,299
2008 08	**MERCEDES A150 CLASSIC SE** 5-door. Metallic Blue, manual, 1 owner, 18,000 miles	£7,499
2003 53	**MERCEDES SLK 200 KOMPRESSOR** Metallic Black, 2 tone, leather interior, FSH, 100,000 miles auto	SOLD
2005 05	**MITSUBISHI COLT 1.3 CZ1** 5-door, Metallic Silver, 75,000 miles	SOLD
2005 55	**NISSAN PRIMESTAR Camper Van 2.7 DCi** 6 speed Manual. Brand new camper conversion by Gee Wagen, 57,000 miles	£11,999
2009 59	**NISSAN NOTE VISIA 1.6 Auto** 5-dr. 1 owner, 24,000 miles	£6,999
2009 59	**NISSAN NOTE 1.4 ACCENTA** 5-door Manual. Cafe Late Metallic, one owner, 39,000 miles, FSH	£5,999
2009 59	**QASHQAI 1.6 ACCENTA.** Bright Red, one owner, 26,000 miles, FSH	£10,399
2009 59	**NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5 DCi ACCENTA 5-door.** Metallic Blue, 32,000 miles, FSH	SOLD
2005 05	**NISSAN X-TRAIL 2.2 DCi SVE Manual,** Only 41,000 miles, Sat Nav, Full Black Leather, Metallic Silver, FSH	SOLD
2009 59	**PEUGEOT 107 998cc** 5-door. Red, 10,000 miles, FSH, 1 owner, £20 a year Road Tax	£6,499
1999 V	**PEUGEOT 206 2.0 HDi MERIDIAN 5-door.** Silver Metallic, 75,000 miles, 12 months MOT	SOLD
2004 04	**PORSCHE CARRERA 4s** 4X4, 4 Wheel Drive. Silver Metallic, Grey Leather, 46,000 miles, FSH, must be seen	REDUCED £24,999
2009 59	**RENAULT CLIO 1.2 DYNAMIQUE EXTREME** 5-door. Metallic Blue, 9,000 miles, 1 owner	£7,299
2005 55	**RENAULT LAGUNA 1.8** Hatchback Manual. Metallic Silver, 90,000 miles	£2,499
2009 59	**RENAULT MEGANE 1.6 HATCHBACK** 5-door. Metallic Red, 24,000 miles, 1 owner	£6,999
2009 59	**RENAULT CLIO 16v EXPRESSION 5-door.** Metallic Silver, 25,000 miles	£6,499
2009 09	**SKODA FABIA 2 1.4 Estate.** Blue Metallic, one owner, only 15,000 miles from new	£7,499
2008 08	**SKODA OCTAVIA 1.9 TDi ELEGANCE Estate,** DS9 Automatic, Metallic Green, FSH	£8,999
2008 58	**TOYOTA AURIS TR D4D HATCHBACK** Manual. Metallic Grey, 28,000 miles	£7,499
2009 59	**VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.6 CLUB** 5-door. Metallic Blue, one owner, 18,000 miles, FSH	£5,499
2009	**VAUXALL ASTRA LIFE 1.6 HATCHBACK** 5-door. One owner, 1,300 miles, Metallic Silver	£6,499
2009 59	**VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 SXi 5-door.** Grey Metallic, 24,000 miles, FSH	£6,499
2006 56	**VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2i 16V CLUB** 5-door. Bright Red, 57,000 miles, air con	SOLD
2010 60	**VAUXHALL COMBO 1.3 CDTi Van.** White, only 23,000 miles, FSH, 1 owner,	£5,999 + VAT
2006 56	**VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.9 CDTi DESIGN** 5-door Manual Hatchback Diesel. 47,000 miles	SOLD
2009 59	**VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.8 SRi** 3-door. Automatic, Metallic Black, 1 owner, 12,000 miles	£7,499
2008 08	**VOLVO XC90 DE SE Geartronic**, 7 Seats, 43,000 miles, half leather interior FSH Graphite Grey Metallic	£19,999
2008 58	**VW PASSAT 2.0HDi HIGHLINE 140hp ESTATE,** 6 speed manual, metallic blue, 84,000 miles, full leather	£7,999
2005 55	**VOLVO V50 2.0 D SE ESTATE.** Metallic Silver, full leather, 84,000 miles	£5,999
2009 59	**VOLVO S40 2.0 TD 143bhp 4-door.** Blue Metallic, 1 owner, only 8,000 miles from new	£10,999
2009 09	**VW GOLF 2.0 TDi SE** 5-door Manual. Metallic Blue, 37,000 miles, one owner	£11,799
2005 55	**VW GOLF TDi SE** 5-door Manual. Metallic Silver, 94,000 miles	SOLD
2008 58	**VW POLO MATCH 1.4 AUTOMATIC 5-door.** Black Metallic, 59,000 miles, alloy wheels, privacy glass	£5,999
2003 03	**VW POLO 1.4 3-door Manual. Bright Red,** 61,000 miles, FSH	£3,250
2009 09	**VW SCIROCCO GT 2.0 TFSI COUPE 200PS** Blue Metallic, one owner, only 13,700 miles, 5-speed box, 18" alloy, climate control, parking sensors	£15,999

2009 59 NISSAN QASHQAI 1.6 ACCENTA Manual. Bright Red, one owner, 26,000 miles, FSH £10,399

2009 59 VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.6 CLUB 5-door. Metallic Blue, one owner, 18,000 miles, FSH £5,499

2008 58 VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT 2.0 HDi ESTATE HIGHLINE 1406bhp 6-Speed. Metallic Blue, full Black leather, 84,000 miles, FSH + cambelt £7,999

2007 56 FORD FOCUS TITANIUM 1.6 Manual. Metallic Silver, 55,000 miles £4,999

2005 05 HONDA JAZZ 1.2 S 5-door Manual. Black, 68,000 miles, FSH £2,999

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The Suzuki Jimny range has been revamped with changes inside and out

The popular Jimny still making inroads

By John Griffiths

Who says size matters when it comes to getting down and dirty on winter roads – or off roads altogether for that matter.

The familiar image of a 4x4 is something big and expensive which dominates the road: so the Suzuki Jimny is frequently something of a surprise to the uninitiated.

It certainly surprised me when it was originally launched here some 14 years ago: this little car with a mere 1,300cc which reached parts others couldn't on a muddy Scottish mountainside.

It still has the honour of being the smallest, least expensive yet among the most convincing off-road performers. These are qualities which have earned the Jimny a loyal core of repeat customers and surprisingly good secondhand values.

Now the two-model Jimny range has been revamped, with prices held at £11,995 for the SZ3, or £12,900 for the flagship SZ4 version. The changes, both inside and out, are largely cosmetic while the essence of the car, which has made it a worldwide success, hasn't been touched.

The interior of the new Suzuki Jimny

The Jimny doesn't have as much room, particularly in the back, as some modern hatchbacks and, with its long-travel, beefed up suspension, you can't expect the same levels of refinement.

But for those who really need a four-wheel drive car without spending a king's ransom the little Suzuki is perfectly evolved.

It's simple yet robust, reliable and with a traditional rather than hi-tech approach to the rigours of off-roading. If that's what you need, the Jimny can hold its head up high in company costing three or four times as much.

The 1,300cc, 85PS engine doesn't, on paper, sound a lot: the 0 to 62mph sprint takes a little over 14 seconds.

But the Jimny has something many of the recent so-called soft-roaders don't, and that's a low-range gearbox. The extra ratios mean that the little engine (combined with the car's relatively light weight) has more than enough puff for going up hills, or through mud without getting bogged down, as well as the fine control needed to safely negotiate slippery downhill stretches.

In wintery conditions on the road you can change from two to four-wheel drive at speeds of up to 60mph at the touch of a button. To select low-range gears there's another button to press (having first stopped, for obvious reasons).

The changes for 2013 include a new front bumper and grille design, a new design bonnet shape with a distinctive central air intake, as well as the repositioning of the front fog lamps. Inside, a new seat fabric trim has been adopted for the SZ3; both SZ3 and SZ4 models have new design front and rear headrests as well as ISOFIX child seat mountings fitted as standard to the rear seats.

Upgraded

If you go for the SZ4, the extra grand gets you upgraded front seats, a leather-trimmed steering wheel, air conditioning and rear privacy glass, Electric windows and door mirrors, anti-lock brakes with brake assist and alloy wheels were also fitted,

Even with the privacy glass, the tall Jimny cabin is light and airy thanks to the particularly large windows, particularly those for rear seat passengers. Space in the back isn't particularly generous – luggage capacity figures of 113 litres with the rear seats up, 324 litres with the rear seats fold flat – gives you some idea.

The square shape of the cargo area and the wide-opening rear door do add practicality, though, if you're after a mini load-lugger: from what I've seen a big dog or a couple of bales of hay aren't unusual.

On the road, the tough, long travel suspension gives the Jimny a firmer ride than some of its 'soft-roader' rivals, but it also means when the going gets tough the Suzuki will keep on going where they can't. You pay your money and take your choice.

It's an option for those who want, and need, more than just tough off-roader looks, but at a price that won't break the bank.

BUMPER TO BUMPER

Suzuki Jimny SZ4
Engine: 1.3 litre petrol engine with five-speed gearbox (with selectable four wheel drive and low range transmission).
Performance: 0-62mph in 14.1 secs
Economy: urban 31.7mpg; country 44.1mpg: average 39.8mpg. CO2 emissions 162g/km.
Insurance: (1-50) Group 15.
Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.
Price: £12,900.

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03 CITROEN XSARA PICASSO £2495
03 FORD KA Red, Choice of 2, low miles £2195
52 SEAT IBIZA TDi Diesel, Black ..... SOLD
52 FORD FIESTA FINESE, Silver £1995
02 MINI COOPER, SILVER, PANORAMIC ROOF ..... SOLD
02 ROVER 25 IMPRESSION Silver, 46k £1995
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57 FIESTA 1.2 STYLE CLIMATE, 3 DOOR, FSH, AIR CON, 56K £4,495
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07 VOLKSWAGEN CADDY SDI, DARK BLUE, SIDE DOOR, CD, AC, VERY CLEAN VAN, (EURO 4), 43K £4,895
59 PEUGEOT PARTNER HDI, SIDE DOOR, ELECTRIC WINDOWS, WHITE 53K £4,850
08 VAUXHALL COMBO 1.7 CDTi FRIDGE VAN 75K £3,995
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56 PEUGEOT PARTNER LX HDI, WHITE, SERVICE HISTORY, ONE OWNER, ONLY 33K ..... SOLD
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MOTORING

Nicola joins Claire at 'front of house'

A second woman has been appointed to the service reception of an Oswestry dealership.

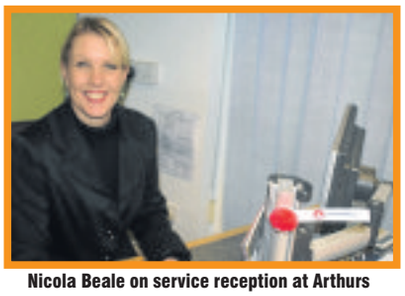
Award-winning Arthurs Vauxhall has appointed Nicola Beale who will work alongside senior service adviser Claire Stanton.

The Upper Brook Street dealership in Oswestry is delighted to welcome Nicola on board. She has 15 years' experience in the motor industry and recently moved to Llanymynech.

Nicola, 44, started as a parts van driver before becoming a parts assistant. She moved into service reception and afterwards sales, working for two Land Rover dealerships.

She has instantly become a Vauxhall fan – not least because her parents have bought a new Corsa.

"The Vauxhall range is a lot more luxurious than I had thought – I am really impressed with the cars," said Nicola who is pleased to be working alongside Claire who has nine years' experience with Arthurs.



Nicola Beale on service reception at Arthurs

Hodgson's got his car choice right

Nigel Williams, managing director of award-winning Arthurs of Oswestry, is delighted that England Soccer Manager Roy Hodgson has become a Vauxhall fan.

Whilst he acknowledges that Roy Hodgson has got his car choice right, Nigel only wishes that the Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer he has bought had been sold to the England boss by football supporting Arthurs!

"Oh well," said a philosophical Nigel, "there's always another day.

"It's a sale – and a strategy – we shall work on for the future."

He nevertheless believes the England Manager's choice of car is the right one.

Segment

"I am a great supporter of the Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer myself.

"With prices starting from £18,040, the Insignia is one of the UK's top selling cars and is number one in its segment with over 46,000 sales alone this year.

"It is a popular car in our territory which includes Shropshire and Mid Wales and we hope the Insignia will inspire Roy to drive England onto the road to Brazil for the next world cup campaign," Nigel added.

Pictured left: Roy Hodgson with his Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer

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SPORT

Massam's score fails to rescue Crusaders

IAN WATSON was victorious in his testimonial match as Swinton Lions side defeated North Wales Crusaders 24-14 at Leigh Sports Village.

It was an even contest for most of the 80 minutes, with Oswestry's Rob Massam crossing for the Crusaders, but Swinton, whenever they needed to, showed more composure in their set-plays to produce the openings in most of their tries.

Crusaders kept on hitting back whenever they fell behind, but Swinton always looked fairly comfortable, despite Crusaders having several great opportunities in the second half.

The visitors opened the scoring through Andy Gorski, who was set up by Durbin after Sheen did excellently to keep the ball alive with an offload to Christiaan Roets on the right flank.

But the Lions soon hit back and raced into a four-try lead.

Firstly, David Mills went over and then ex-Crusader Liam Hulme, who has signed from Warrington Wolves, showed great strength to touch down underneath the sticks.

Hawkyard was next on the scoresheet, weaving across the line to score next to the posts, and Watkins grabbed the fourth as he collected a loose carry after Massam failed to claim Ian Watson's high bomb.

However, North Wales hit

Rob Massam

back through Massam as he powered his way over in the corner, and if it wasn't for some great tracking back by the Swinton defensive line, trialist Craig White may have scored an interception try on his debut.

Whatever North Wales Crusaders head coach Clive Griffiths said to his troops at half time, it certainly came to effect – Toby Adamson went over in the left corner as his side looked to get themselves back into the game.North Wales Crusaders were gathering momentum and starting to take control of the match, and when Stuart Reardon broke down the right, with both Roets and Craig White in support, it looked as though they would pull back the deficit to within one converted try.

Reardon took the option to go alone and was tackled short of the line. Although North Wales gained a scrum for a charge down in the next set, that was the end of Crusaders' period of sustained pressure on the Lions.

And Swinton soon turned on the pace – Chris Clarke's exemplary grubber kick was touched down by Martin Ainscough and Andy Ballard finished off a flowing move in the left corner after Swinton had received a dubious penalty as North Wales' Gorski was penalised for a voluntary tackle.

The game sizzled out in the final 20 minutes with the game out of Crusaders' reached, but both sides continued to create chances.

Members of the successful Ellesmere College tennis team

Team fights way to the finals

YOUNG tennis stars from Ellesmere College reached the National Finals to represent the Midlands in the AEGON National Schools Championships.

The team consisting of pupils from Year 10 played against teams from the northern, south east, and south west sections.

Having won the county title and regional qualifiers the team of Sammy Leung, Ole Linne, Aaron Sham and Aleksandras Calovas came through the regional finals at Warwick University.

This time it was Ellesmere College, an unseeded team who upset top seeds Minster School in the opening round after a narrow 7-6 shootout win and then went on to defeat number two seeds Lancaster School in the Year 10 Boys Midlands Finals to earn their place at the National Finals.

Matt Byford, Circuit Director for AEGON Team Tennis Schools said: "The Year 8 and 10 Quarter Finals have been a real success and it's been great to see 64 schools tennis teams gather to compete on a regional level after their efforts over the Summer and Autumn terms.

"Over 2,400 teams entered the 2012 competition and by this stage of the competition the 16 teams that remain are very strong schools tennis teams with a number of the top junior players in the country on court."

In the final, held at the Bolton arena Ellesmere College came up against the High School of Glasgow, University College School, London and Millfield School, Somerset where they narrowly missing out on top spot.

Stephen Welti, Senior Performance Coach at Ellesmere said:" this is a very exciting time for our tennis academy, the standard in the finals was very high and the boys rose to the challenge."

National vest for athlete Abigail

Abigail Bowers in her first Welsh vest

OSWESTRY Olympian, Abigail Bowers from Welshpool High School, gained her first Welsh vest after finishing fourth in the Welsh Schools Combined Events competition.

Abi was selected to compete for her country at the Schools International Athletics Board competition (SIAB) against the best athletes from England, Ireland and Scotland at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow.

The opening event in the Under 16 Girls Pentathlon indoors is the long jump where Abi soared 4.85m to gain 519 points.

She followed this with a new personal best of 9.17s in the 60m hurdles to score 875 points then jumped 1.36m (470 points) in the high jump.

In the Shot Abi putted another personal best of 7.67m (378 points) then was the fastest Welsh athlete in the 800m with a time of 2.33.11m (654), a third personal best performance.

A final score of 2896 points ensured Abi finished 10th overall and was the second highest scoring Welsh athlete.

Above par Welshpool land golf club of the year award

WELSHPOOL golfers are celebrating the prize as Welsh Golf Club of the Year after 12 months of success which has included attracting almost 100 new members.

The club took the award in the most competitive ever year at the Future Financials 2012 Welsh Golf Awards held at the Vale of Glamorgan hotel and resort.

Irish Open champion Jamie Donaldson has been rewarded for his excellent season by winning the Golf Union of Wales tour professional of the year award for the second year running.

European Amateur champion Rhys Pugh and Curtis Cup star Amy Boulden shared the Amateur Golfer of the Year award, also for the second year running, as once against their achievements were considered inseparable.

GOLF
by David Banner

Rhyl's Anthony Middleton was the Wales PGA Professional of the Year for his work which includes running three junior academies.

Welshpool were on the shortlist last year, with Golf Union of Wales chief executive Richard Dixon commenting: "This year has seen the strongest entry list for the Club of the Year that we have ever had.

Langland Bay, Pennard, Pontypool and Trefloyne were the other candidates, but Welshpool's list of improvements are certainly impressive.

They have increased subscriptions by almost a third with general income up 20 per cent, allowing them to employ a secretary five days a week.

They have achieved the highest Golf Development Wales certification for their junior section, got involved with social media, improved facilities including a fleet of buggies, improved the course and embraced the Equality Act.

Also their ladies team are the Montgomeryshire Team of the Year, a member has been selected for the Wales Girls team and junior member Frankie Jones is a two-time winner of the British Junior Disabled Championship.

"It is wonderful to receive this award," said club captain David Rowlands.

"It has been a lot of hard work, but it has been great to be part of this.

"It is great for the club, we are not a big club but we are very, very hard-working. Other golf courses have sprung up and taken our members over time, but those members are coming back.

"The opening up of our course with buggies means our elder members are coming back, we have more younger members and our disabled members find access to the course much easier.

"We have increased our membership, we have not been afraid to introduce fresh members onto our committees with young people to take up the mantle which has been very important."

Donaldson fought off the close competition of Ladies European Tour winner Lydia Hall as they both picked up their maiden titles, but the Macclesfield golfer had greater consistency through the season which included getting into the world's top 50.

Excellent

Andrew Ingram, chairman of the Teams and Performance committee who judged the award said: "It was very close between the two who both had great wins this season, but in the end Jamie did enough to earn the award once again.

"It is nice to think back to when he was in the Wales amateur teams coming up through the ranks and to see how well he is doing now.

"He had an excellent win at the Irish Open, was seventh in the US PGA, forced his way into the world's top 50, finished a career-high 19th on the Race to Dubai with more than 1 million Euros in winnings."

Pugh was on home ground at the Vale of Glamorgan hotel where his is a member and the club have played a large role in his development, but he was delighted to receive the award again on the back of becoming the first Welsh golfer to win the European Amateur title, following in the footsteps of Rory McIlroy and Sergio Garcia amongst others.

Battling Rangers given boost after derby clash draw

By Craig Birch

ELLESMERE Rangers claimed only their fourth point of the Midland Alliance season when they came from behind to draw away at Bridgnorth Town.

The Boxing Day draw ruined the birthday of Bridgnorth mannager Mark Clyde who had argued that the game should have been called off.

Despite the conditions, Town were ahead at half-time through a goal from central defender Rich Goulding five minutes before the break.

Goulding came up from the back to benefit from a short corner routine between Mike Evans and Karl Griffiths.

Evans played a one-two with the dead ball to Griffiths , then slid a pass across the wet turf for Goulding to come through a group of players and tap home .

But Rangers – bottom of the table and without a win all season – battled back after the break and got back on level terms with 25 minutes left.

A neat passing move allowed Steve O'Reilly to put Kevin Renshaw in the clear and the striker latched onto the loose ball to finish past well and earn Delwyn Humphries' men a share of the spoils.

Rangers boss Humphries agreed the fixture should have never got started but felt his side were worth a point, although their season-long 19 game wait for a league win goes on.

He said: "The game should have been called off, but it wasn't and it was the same conditions for both sides although, in fairness, we mastered it a bit better.

"We could have won but the one thing we didn't do is lose and it was the performance that encouraged me the most, not the result.

"Considering the pitch, we played some decent stuff at times and the lads reacted to the chat we had before the game about what I wanted from them."

Eleanor lands top fencing trophy

Eleanor Regnart-Butler with her under -14 Junior Series Girls Foil trophy

ELEANOR Regnart-Butler, a second form pupil from Oswestry School, made her mark with trophy success when competing in the final round of the British Fencing North West Junior Series held in Bury.

Eleanor worked her way through to the final, which she won 15-4, and her points from this win secured her the series victory which saw her presented with the under-14 North West Junior Series Girls Foil trophy. On the back of this success, Eleanor has also been invited to fight for the Welsh Cadet team in the Winton Cup.

Darren Hollingsworth, Director of Sport at the school, commented: "We are delighted with Eleanor's success, and wish her luck for the Winton Cup."

Club seeks top players

OSWESTRY Cricket Club are looking for a top quality opening bowler and wicket-keeper to play in first team this season.

Any player thinking they can fill either of the roles is asked to call club captain Mike Robinson urgently on 07971 559657.

Oswestry are looking to build on a highly successful 2012 season, where the first team finished champions of Division Three in the Birmingham and District Premier league and will now play in the highest standard in the club's history,.

The Second team playing in Reserve Division Two of the BPL, our Third team came fifth in their league and also were promoted.

Four in losing county team

FOUR Oswestry players were in the Shropshire RFC's under 14 side that took on their Staffordshire counterparts at Wolverhampton RFC's ground.

Calum Jones, Matt Gozzer, Rohan Hodson and Joe Beard were joined by former team mate Rory Davies, who is now at Shrewsbury, in the team that went down 17-5.

The Shropshire side failed to convert their possession into points in a game that was undoubtedly affected by the slippery conditions combined with numb hands and feet in the cold and damp weather.

The Shropshire team will be frustrated to have lost this closely run game which could have gone either way. Parents and players were joined in the club house for the post match formalities by Leicester, England and British & Irish Lion, Tom Croft.

With training resuming after the Festive break the team will be keen to secure their first win of the season.

● Oswestry Sportsman's Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 9, at the Park Hall Pavilion. England and Lions legend Rory Underwood will be speaking at the event.

High scores at drive-in

SUSIE Graham-Wood won the front nine holes at the Oswestry Golf Club Lady Captains Drive-in 2013.

Susie scored 18 points and was followed by Ericab Moss with 17 points and Shelia McKenzie with 16 points.

Gina Hatt won the back nine holes with 20 points with Margaret Green beating Celia Pearce on count-back after both had scored 17 points.

SPORT

Spar Mid Wales League

DIVISION 1

	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
Llanidloes	14	11	2	69	19	34
Four Crosses	15	10	2	39	19	33
Builth Wells	15	9	3	38	25	30
Aberaeron	15	9	4	28	14	29
Tywyn/Bryncrug	14	9	5	45	27	27
Berriew	18	8	5	42	24	29
Waterloo	14	8	4	31	31	26
Montgomery	11	6	2	31	13	21
Llansantffraid	14	6	5	40	27	21
Bow Street	13	5	4	37	33	19
Aber Uni.	13	6	6	30	26	19
Newbridge	14	5	6	30	31	18
Welshpool	19	4	14	29	63	13
Carno	13	3	9	18	30	10
Dyffryn Banw	17	2	15	18	77	6
Dolgellau	17	1	16	12	78	3

DIVISION 2

	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
Llanfair Utd	12	11	0	46	7	34
L'drindod Wells	12	10	2	40	9	30
Kerry	13	7	5	20	21	22
Knighton	13	6	4	33	23	21
Rhosgoch	15	5	5	38	29	20
Hay St Marys	14	6	6	42	43	20
Presteigne	12	4	5	32	36	15
Talgarth	15	4	8	24	40	15
Abermule	12	3	7	22	36	11
Aberdyfi	13	3	8	25	43	11
Bont	12	3	7	20	40	11
Machynlleth	10	3	6	23	34	10
Llanfyllin	9	2	4	18	22	9

Montgomery fire out warning by beating leaders

MONTGOMERY underlined their title credentials in the Spar Mid Wales League division one after pulling off a stunning 3-1 win at leaders Llanidloes Town.

Victory lifted Clive McNamee's side up to eighth spot, and in range of the leading pack with games in hand as they bid to mount a challenge in the second half of the season.

Karl Seliearts had put Llani ahead in the heavy conditions but two goals from Rhidian Morris and one from Jake Parr earned Monty the win, sentencing the Daffs to their first home defeat of the season.

Despite the defeat, Llani stayed one point clear of FOUR CROSSES whose home clash with LLANSANTFFRAID Village was one of five games in the league postponed due to waterlogged piches.

BERRIEW moved up to fourth as a late strike from Mark Jones earned a 2-1 home win over struggling DYFFRYN BANW.

Rob Pritchard gave Berriew the lead, Tom Foulkes then levelled 10 minutes from time, but the visitors returned empty handed as Jones pounced to secure the spoils.

WATERLOO ROVERS took the local bragging rights as they shaded a 1-0 win at derby rivals WELSHPOOL TOWN.

Charlie Proctor fired the decisive goal with a well taken strike late in the first half to find a way through in a game of few chances with the defences on top.

Pounding

Dolgellau's problems continue to mount at the foot of the table as they crashed 8-1 at Tywyn Bryncrug.

Only two games survived in the Spar Mid Wales League last Saturday, with Llanidloes Town bouncing back from their shock home defeat against Montgomery with a 2-1 win at lowly Carno.

Despite falling behind to a headed goal, the Daffs hit back with goals in each half from Tom Goodwin and Karl Seliearts to move four points clear at the top of division one.

In division two, Abermule ran out 4-0 winners over Kerry to climb away from the basement pack

The fixture list took a real pounding from the wet weather with only a couple of games surviving the deluge.

Among the casualties was the derby between Waterloo Rovers and Welshpool, the latter out for revenge after losing the first game between the sides 1-0 on Boxing Day.

Unbeaten LLANFAIR UNITED marched on at the top of the Spar Mid Wales League second division with a 3-1 home derby win over lowly LLANFYLLIN that took them four points clear.

Their cause was helped with second placed Llandrindod Wells slipping to a 2-1 defeat at fifth placed Hay St Mary's, while Rhosgoch are up to fourth with a comfortable 4-0 win at Talgarth.

On a very wet Boxing Day afternoon, United prevailed in the end against local rivals Llanfyllin, watched by a good crowd despite the late change of venue to Llanfair due to the wet weather.

The first half of a mud soaked affair was closely contested with the home side taking the lead through Paul Griffiths before Llanfyllin, battling to escape the lower reaches of here table, equalised when Steven Morris netted from close range.

Geraint Jones grabbed Llanfair's second before half time by netting a rebound after James Davies did brilliantly down the left wing.

Re-signed

With the pitch cutting up, Llanfair dominated the second half and missed a lot of good chances before Daniel Jones' effort made it 3-1 to seal the win 10 minutes from time after being played in with just the Llanfyllin keeper to beat.

● Montgomery Town have re-signed striker Elliott Jones after a spell with Newtown, with the young striker having featured mainly from the bench since arriving at Latham Park this summer.

Mario is looking for good cup run

LOWLY Llanrhaeadr take a timely break from their relegation concerns as they bid to discover winning ways at home to Dyffryn Banw in the third round of the Central Wales Cup.

After being frustrated by three successive postponements in their battle to escape basement danger in the Cymru Alliance, Mario Iaquinta's side will be anxious the wet weather relents as they bid to get back on the pitch on Saturday.

And they will be hopeful of chalking up a much needed victory against a struggling Banw side languishing deep in relegation trouble themselves in the Spar Mid Wales League division one.

Since taking charge, Iaquinta has witnessed just one game while seeing three others postponed due to the continuing wet weather, with his side's home clash against Porthmadog last weekend the latest casualty.

Strugglers

The villagers languish second from bottom, four points adrift of Penycae who lie one place above, but still have realistic hope of escaping the drop with 14 games remaining.

Former Welshpool midfielder George Hughes has joined from Cefn Druids to boost the cause, and front runner Ben White is also back at the club from local rivals Guilsfield.

Jamie Evans, Hamish Clifton and keeper Darren Powell are also back in the ranks and Gwyn Williams is another player to return.

While most of the Cymru Alliance was washed out by waterlogged pitches last Saturday, two of Llanrhaeadr's relegation rivals, Llandudno and Rhydmwyn, took the chance to ease their basement fears with wins.

Llandudno were 2-0 winners over visiting Holyhead Hotspur while Rhydy overcame fellow strugglers Ruthin Town 2-1.

Saints score five but boss wants more from the team

The New Saints 5 GAP Connah's Quay 1

CARL DARLINGTON believes there's still room for improvement despite The New Saints underling their Welsh Premier title credentials with an emphatic victory over GAP Connah's Quay.

The defending champions reeled off their third straight win to cement pole position, which saw them go into the Christmas period with a healthy five point lead at the top.

Five different scorers highlighted the Saints' scoring potential throughout the pitch, but the Oswestry hosts carved enough chances to have feasibly doubled their advantage.

"It was a very important win, overall it was very pleasing, and I've been told it is the first time we have been top at Christmas since 2006," said head coach Darlington.

FOOTBALL
by John Bridgwater

"It was good to score five goals which will help boost our goal difference, but we really should have scored a lot more with all the chances we had.

"In tighter games we can't afford to squander so many clear cut chances, and still need to be more ruthless.

"After going ahead, we were disappointed with the goal we conceded, but we reacted well after that and had three or four chances in the first half without taking them.

"We pressed them high up the pitch and dominated the second half, we could have scored a lot more than five but we've now won our last three league games, and we're on a roll."

Mike Wilde opened the scoring after just five minutes when nodding in after his initial shot had struck the bar, but the striker sustained a kick to his eye in scoring the goal which forced him to be replaced by Matty Williams.

GAP briefly rallied, with youngster Rhys Healey breaking clear before neatly steering his shot low past keeper Paul Harrison to level matters three minutes later.

But the Saints were posing plenty of problems at the other end, with Aeron Edwards and Alex Darlington both foiled by smart saves from keeper John Rushton, while Steve Evans had a goalbound effort cleared off the line.

Their endeavours, however, finally paid off on 35 minutes when Chris Seargeant's free kick rattled the bar, and defender Phil Baker stooped to head into the net.

Incisive

With GAP disrupted by a couple of injuries, TNS bossed much of the second period, with swift movement and passing exposing a toiling defence.

And there was no way back for the visitors once Sam Finley had added a third on 55 minutes when striking a fine 25-yard effort inside the left post.

Evans had another shot blocked on the line from a corner before left back Chris Marriott made it 4-1 midway through the half when capping another incisive move by rounding Rushton to fire into the roof of the net from a tight angle.

Substitute Greg Draper then got in on the act just moments after coming on the pitch when slotting in from close range after Simon Spender had crossed from the right byline in the 76th minute following more composed build-up play.

With GAP now a spent force, the Saints continued to prise openings almost at will and, despite failing to add to their tally, would be more than happy with their efforts as they tightened their grip at the top.

Former TNS striker Chris Sharp who has joined Hereford

Former TNS striker moves to Hereford

FORMER TNS striker Chris Sharp has left AFC Telford United to join rival Blue Square Premier outfit Hereford United. Sharp, 26, moved to Edgar Street for a fee of around £3,000, considerably less than the Bucks paid to The New Saints when the player moved in August 2011.

"We received an approach from Hereford and, once it was established that the player wished to move on, it was important to get the deal done," said Telford chairman Lee Carter.

Sharp only recently returned to the Bucks' ranks following a hernia operation in the summer and scored 12 goals from 37 (+8) appearances for the club.

The son of ex-Everton and Scotland player and Bangor City manager Graeme, he started his Welsh Premier career with Rhyl, but missed the whole of league season 2006/7 after breaking a leg in the Lilywhites' Uefa Cup campaign.

Despite recovering to return to action in September 2007, he was released from Belle Vue the following summer by mutual consent and signed for Bangor City.

The leading scorer at Farrar Road in 2008/9, he left in January 2010 to join TNS and has a career total of 62 WPL goals from 86 (+32) appearances.

Swansea tie in youth cup

THE New Saints Youth have been drawn against Swansea City in the quarter-finals of the FAW Youth Cup.

The tie, which will be played at Park Hall Stadium on Sunday, February, 10 pits the two finalists of last season against one another.

The Swans defeated the Saints 2-1 in April and the Oswestry side are now hoping for revenge.

Draw: Cambrian & Clydach FC v Cefn Druids, Flint Town United v Carmarthen Town, The New Saints FC v Swansea City, West End v Gap Connah's Quay FC.

Wilde hits eighth goal of the season to sink Bala

The New Saints goal scorer Mike Wilde in full flight during the victory over Bala

TNS 1 Bala Town 0

MIKE Wilde's first half strike, his eighth goal of the season, kept The New Saints flying high at the top of the Welsh Premier in a closely contested encounter at Park Hall, ***writes John Bridgwater.***

But the Oswestry men – unchanged from their 5-1 hammering of GAP Connah's Quay in their previous outing – were made to battle all the way before seeing off the spirited Lakesiders who pressed for much of the second half.

Bala have now picked up just one point from their last four outings, but would reflect on a missed penalty in the first half while failing to capitalise on their pressure in the second period.

Territory

A rain drenched Boxing Day clash saw high flying TNS start brightly with Chris Jones and Alex Darlington have a couple of early efforts before Wilde put the hosts ahead on 20 minutes when coolly slotting home from Sam Finley's neat pass.

The visitors had a golden chance to quickly get back on terms when awarded a penalty following a push on Stef Edwards, but the normally reliable Lee Hunt saw his spot kick saved by home captain Paul Harrison who dived to his left to save.

Although Aeron Edwards and Steve Evans both put efforts off target for the hosts, Bala enjoyed plenty of territory and possession in the second half with Kenny Lunt firing wide from close range as they pressed for a leveller.

The Lakesiders looked increasingly threatening with Mark Connolly putting a couple of efforts wide, his second with a powerful free kick, but the TNS defence held firm.

Mike Wilde is mobbed after his goal

At the other end, Chris Jones was causing Bala plenty of problems on the break with some terrific runs, and twice went close to sealing the win.

Finley also went close to a second late on when floating an effort over the bar, but the Saints had just about done enough to secure a vital win – their fourth victory on the trot – to put them seven points clear at the top.

New Year opener is tricky one for Morda

MORDA UNITED face a tricky trip to Allscott when the Mercian Regional League premier division resumes after its festive break on Saturday.

Lying fourth in the table, the Weston Road men will be out to step up the pressure on the leaders, but points will be hard-earned against an Allscott side who have hit some good form of late.

At the other end of the table, second bottom WESTON RHYN face a tough clash at title chasing AFC Ludlow as they bid for much needed points in their relegation battle.

League leaders Church Stretton are hot favourites to collect another three points on Saturday.

Stretton, two points clear of FC Hodnet albeit having played two more games, have home advantage against the top-flight's backmarkers Dawley Town.

Whitchurch Alport, who have had a tough introduction to life in the Mercian League after switching from the Cheshire League, will hope Saturday's trip to Ketley Bank United signals the start of a much more successful second half of the season.

Reserves

Alport are currently in the premier division's bottom three having won just two of their dozen league games.

In division one, the league cup takes centre stage with OSWESTRY BOYS CLUB hoping to launch a good run in the competition when they head to Meole Brace in the first round.

OSWESTRY LIONS are also on the road when they visit Wrockwardine Juniors while Morda reserves are at home to Shawbury reserves in another first round tie.

Saturday's fixtures are : Premier Division (2pm): AFC Ludlow v Weston Rhyn, Allscott v Morda United, Church Stretton v Dawley Town, Ketley Bank United v Whitchurch Alport, Oakengates Athletic v Wellington Amateurs Res, Telford Juniors v FC Hodnet.

Sportsjamkits.com Division One Cup first round (1.30pm): Bishop's Castle v Wroxeter Rovers, Brown Clee v Rock Rovers, Hopesgate v Prees, Madeley Sports v Ketley Town, Meole Brace v Oswestry Boys Club, Morda United Res v Shawbury United Res, Wrockwardine Wood Juniors v Oswestry Lions.

sportsjamkits.com Division Two Cup first round (1.30pm): Albrighton Juniors v Market Drayton Tigers, Athletico Broseley v AFC Wellington, Childs Ercall v Claverley, Denso v Impact United, Edgmond Rangers v Donnington Sports & Social, Highley Miners Welfare v Wrockwardine Wood, Madeley Sports Res v Spalaig Britannia, Oakengates Rangers v Randlay 2012.

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COBRA promotion hopes get boost

COBRA's promotion ambitions in rugby's Welsh League division two (north) have been given a surprise New Year boost after learning that the top two sides will go up automatically at the end of the season.

In the past, only the champions were certain to be promoted, with the runners-up having to go into a play-off clash with the second bottom team from division one.

Last season, champions Dolgellau went up as of right, while COBRA, who finished second, lost in the play-offs to Mold, but the Meifod men were aggrieved that their opponents had strengthened their team specifically for the play-off game.

COBRA are again lying second in the table this time around, three points behind leaders Denbigh, and spokesman James Watkin admits it's good news for the ambitious Llanfair Caereinion club.

"Teams are artificially strengthened in the play-offs so we're delighted that two clubs will now be automatically promoted," he said.

"It was felt that this league is strong enough now to justify two sides being promoted automatically, while two sides will also be promoted from the division below us.

"But we've got a lot of work to do before then and have got a tough month coming up with a home game against Machynlleth on Saturday while we've then got to go to leaders Denbigh. At the end of the month we're also at home to Llandudno who are one place below us."

COBRA, meanwhile, face a tough hurdle if they are to keep their flag flying in the Swalec Bowl after being paired with high flying Denbigh in the fourth round.

Four North Wales sides had made it through to the final regionalised stage, with Llangollen visiting Shotton Steel in the other tie, so the Meifod side will reflect their clash with Denbigh represents the toughest tie they could have expected.

However, at least they have home advantage as they bid to avenge a 10-3 defeat at the hands of the title favourites in the Welsh League division two north earlier in the season. The tie will be played on Saturday, January 19, 2013

COBRA reached this stage of the Swalec Bowl after progressing with a competent 16-5 victory over Colwyn Bay in a mud-filled affair. And spokesman James Watkin said: "We're not too unhappy with the draw against Denbigh as we're at home and it will give us chance to put the record straight as we didn't do ourselves justice in the league when we lost to them earlier in the season.

"The only downside is that we're away to them in the league the week before which is not ideal."

COBRA had been due to entertain Oswestry in the Nick Whiffen Memorial Cup last Saturday, but the match was postponed due to the wet weather.

Meanwhile, WELSHPOOL return to duty on Saturday when they head to lowly Bangor looking to revive their promotion ambitions in the Welsh League division three (north).

The season also resumes for OSWESTRY in the South Lancs and Cheshire Two when they welcome fourth placed Liverpool Coll on Saturday. After a festive break, they will be keen to bounce back after their 15-7 loss to Marple in their last action before Christmas with the visitors ending up well beaten by their hard working Cheshire hosts.

Old club clash for Guilsfield manager

GUILSFIELD boss Russell Cadwallader comes face to face with his old club when the Cymru Alliance side host Berriew in the third round of the Central Wales Cup on Saturday.

Cadwallader spent four successful seasons as manager of Berriew before joining the Guils two years ago, and admits his side will face a tricky test.

"I had some good times at Berriew, we won a few cups and got promotion to the Cymru Alliance, so it should be an interesting game," he said.

"I saw them play on Boxing Day and they've got some good young players and it will be a test for us, but it's not a game we want to lose."

Injuries

Berriew are having a strong season in the Spar Mid Wales League division one and currently lie fourth after their 2-1 win against Dyffryn Banw.

Guilsfield's squad has been reduced by the recent departure of Ben White to Llanrhaeadr and midfielder John Harris to Spar Mid Wales League division one title chasers Four Crosses.

"We only had a squad of 16 so that is now down to 14, so we can't afford any injuries," added Cadwallader. "I've put seven days notice on a couple of players but the problem is that you can't keep everyone happy and players don't want to just to be part of the squad."

Like the rest of the Cymru Alliance, Guilsfield have been hit by the weather with their last three matches all being postponed.

Last Saturday's trip to Conwy Borough was called off, while previous matches against Rhyl and Penrhyncoch suffered a similar fate. But they will be hoping that Saturday's cup clash beats the elements.

SEARGEANT SIGNS NEW SAINTS DEAL

CHRIS SEARGEANT has pledged his future to The New Saints for another season after agreeing a one year contract extension for the Welsh Premier leaders.

The 26-year-old midfielder, who joined from Bangor City in 2009, has been a key component for the Saints this term, scoring four goals to take the defending champions to the top of the table.

Now in his fourth season with the club, Seargeant has made 67 starts and 29 substitutes appearances, scoring 15 goals. He was due to add to his appearances last night (wed) when TNS headed to Bala Town looking to consolidate pole position.

by John Bridgwater

After last night's action, TNS are back on the road for a televised clash at Newtown on Saturday (3.15) – with revenge on their minds after suffering a surprise 1-0 defeat at home to the Robins earlier in the season.

Points, however, promise to be hard-earned as the Mid Wales hosts have revived their flagging campaign with three successive wins to move on the brink of a top six place. Central defender Steve Evans returns to face Newtown after missing out in midweek with a one match ban, but Aeron Edwards is a doubt with a hamstring injury he picked up last week.

Waterlogged

Since their shock 3-0 home loss to Carmarthen Town, the Saints have responded well with four straight victories in the league as well as notching a Welsh Cup win against Conwy.

The following Saturday (January 12), the Saints will be back at Newtown's Latham Park in pursuit of their first silverware of the season when they take on Carmarthen Town in the Word League Cup final.

The game, which kicks off at 3pm, will be screened live on S4C.

It's a big month for the Saints who also host Rhyl in the Welsh Cup fourth round on Saturday, January 25.

Last night''s clash at Bala should have been played on New Year's Day, but was put back 24 hours due to a waterlogged pitch at Maes Tegid.

"We've never had an easy game against Bala, and we never will," said TNS head coach Carl Darlington.

"They've got good players who can cause problems for any team."

TNS's title quest was given a boost with chief rivals Bangor City suffering a poor festive period, first drawing 3-3 against Prestatyn after conceding three late goals, and then slumping 4-1 to the same side on New Year's Day. Prestatyn are now in second spot after their victory over the Citizens.

Midfield star Chris Seargeant, left, with TNS director of football Craig Harrison

Town are aiming to hit back after loss

WELSHPOOL Town look to pick themselves up from their derby loss as they chase a place in the fourth round of the Central Wales Cup when they host lowly Carno on Saturday.

A narrow 1-0 defeat at home to Waterloo Rovers on Boxing Day kept the Lilywhites fourth from bottom in division one not the Spar Mid Wales League, one place above this weekend's opponents.

But they now turn their thoughts to the Central Wales Cup and will be looking to get the better of a Carno side who were 2-1 winners in the Welsh Cup earlier in the season.

Since then Pool have defeated their rivals 3-1 in the league, and will fancy their chances against a Carno side whose fortunes have faltered.

Spectacle

"We're still in the league cup and Central Wales Cup, and it would be nice to have a run in one of those," said Pool boss Dave Jones.

"Carno may not be winning many games, but they're no whipping boys and don't lose by many, so we're expecting a tough game."

Due to a funeral, Carno had wanted to play the tie on Friday, but Pool were unable to accommodate their wish as they would have been struggling to field a side.

Meanwhile, Lilywhites boss Jones admitted his side's one goal defeat to Waterloo at Maesydre was not a great spectacle.

The match was decided by a first half strike from Charlie Proctor but, that apart, there were very few chances in heavy conditions.

"The game was only just played, and there was no flow to the game on the heavy pitch," he said.

WATERLOO ROVERS, who consolidated seventh spot in the Spar Mid Wales League division one with their narrow win over Welshpool, will also be looking to progress in the Central Wales Cup when they host Newbridge on Saturday.

United boss primed for test

MANAGER Rhys Stephens is anticipating a stern test as his high flying Llanfair United side welcome Knighton Town in the third round of the Central Wales Cup on Saturday.

Unbeaten Llanfair have swept all before them this season to move four points clear at the top of the Spar Mid Wales League division two.

But Stephens, who is hopeful of a run in the cup to complement their league challenge, knows it won't be easy as his side bid to progress to the fourth round.

"We won't be taking anything for granted as Knighton are on a good run and are up to fourth in the table," he said.

FOUR CROSSES, challenging for honours in the Spar Mid Wales League division two, take a break from their league quest to host Hay St Mary's in the third round of the league cup. They have signed John Harris from Guilsfield, but striker Scott Bright has returned to Oswestry Lions. Elsewhere, LLANSANTFFRAID head to Talgarth Town, MONTGOMERY TOWN face a tricky trip to second division promotion hopefuls Llandrindod Wells while Kerry visit Rhayader Town.

Central Wales Challenge Cup Round three (1.45 except where stated): Aberaeron v Tregaron Cardigan Tn v Builth Wells, Four Crosses v Hay St Marys, Guilsfield v Berriew (2.30), Llandrindod Wells v Montgomery Tn (2.30), Llanfair United v Knighton Tn, Llanidloes Tn v Penrhyncoch (2.30), Llanrhaeadr v Dyffryn Banw, Presteigne v Aberystwyth U (2.30), Rhayader Tn v Kerry (2.30), Talgarth Tn v Llansantffraid, Tywyn Bryncrug v Rhosgoch, Waterloo Rovers v Newbridge, Welshpool Town v Carno (2.30).

Second round: Machynlleth v New Quay.

Rangers bring in new players

DELWYN HUMPHREYS continues to reshape his Ellesmere Rangers squad as the Beech Grove men bid for lift off over the second half of the season by targeting a great escape from relegation in the Midland Alliance.

Rangers remain well adrift at the foot of the table and they went into last night's (Wednesday's) scheduled trip to Tividale without a win some 19 games into their testing campaign.

But Humphreys – whose squad includes a number of former Shrewsbury Town trainees, among them Mat Fletcher, Rob Dean, Jamie Haynes and Dan Tolley – will be hoping the new arrivals can help signal a much needed upturn in fortunes.

Former Rangers goalkeeper Lee Davis has rejoined the club while Humphreys has also swooped for Marcus Sharrad, an ex-Ludlow Town player who has returned to the area after studying at Bristol University, former AFC Telford United youth teamer Dave Howarth and Llanrhaedr's Dan Roberts.

Rangers will also be hoping for better luck with the weather after losing yet another game to a waterlogged pitch last weekend, the home clash against Heath Hayes. Rangers host mid-table Kirby Muxloe on Saturday (3pm) before heading to 17th placed Studley on Tuesday (7.45pm).

Rangers did play once over the festive period and claimed a point from a 1-1 draw at high flying rivals Bridgnorth Town.

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